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WE hope that something may come of Sir John Simon's Christmas visit to the Continent—in the course of which, as the Prime Minister said with his accustomed caution, "it is possible that he may take any opportunity that may arise of seeing members of the Government through whose capital he may be passing." But we are not very sanguine about the results of this drop-in-for-a-cup-of-tea diplomacy. The official exchanges that are going on have done nothing as yet to clear the air. Signor Mussolini for the moment is lying low. The German terms, which have been forwarded to Paris by the French Ambassador, are quite unpalatable to France. Herr Hitler is willing, it appears, to accept control of all forms of armament provided it applies to every State, and he offers a pact of non-aggression. But he insists on his conscript army of 300,000 men, armed with defensive weapons (and with offensive weapons also, failing agreement to abolish these by other Powers). And he wants the Saar returned to Germany without recourse to the plebiscite provided for in the Versailles Treaty.

### France and Her Arms

The way the wind is blowing in Paris was shown by debates in both Chambers this week. The Budget has got through the Senate without any serious opposition. The Prime Minister assured his critics that he has no more affection for his financial proposals than they have; but that it is urgent to balance the Budget and avoid any further crisis in the present precarious state of international affairs. In the Chamber of Deputies a Bill was introduced to alter recruiting methods so as to keep up the strength of the army during the years 1936 to 1940. The normal annual average of men called up is 250,000; in 1936 there would, under the present system, be only 116,000. It is now proposed by an adjustment of the recruiting age to raise that figure to 200,000. The General Staff, of course, and the politicians of the Right are not satisfied with this; but M. Daladier, in a heated argument with M. Tardieu, insisted that France was well prepared, alike in men, material and fortifications. It is something that the Government refuse to be hustled into an increase of effectives. But the assurances given in regard to actual forces and the general tone of the discussion suggest that hopes of any disarmament convention have practically vanished.

### What is Great Britain's Policy?

There is in France, of course, a far more profound distrust of Germany, and a far livelier fear of Hitler's designs, than in this country. There is also a growing despair at the unwillingness of the British Government not merely to guarantee France's security, but (as the French at least think) to realise the danger that threatens all Europe, including England. Is there any British policy, beyond smooth talk, they ask. A preventive war has been ruled out on various grounds. Two of these, which are important in France, are that there would be a large pacifist minority opposed to anything that could be interpreted as French aggression, and that the Comité des Forges group, on both sides of the frontier, are very far from being anti-Hitlerite. They would like to see the martial activities of Germany directed eastward—against Russia. But the League of Nations is to be saved and Hitler's plans frustrated by diplomacy, loyalty and positive help from Great Britain are indispensable. Failing that, there will be publication of the prodigious extent of Germany's rearmament and a rapid move to the Right in France—and war before very long. So say the prophets in Paris. For the moment there is a Christmas truce—as there was in the trenches in 1915.

### President Roosevelt's Gold Policy

The Americans, after leaving their buying price for gold unaltered for a fortnight, have raised it again, though only to a small extent. The dollar has accordingly fallen again, less because of the change in itself, than because the clear sign that the gold policy remains unaltered has destroyed the misplaced confidence of those who believed stabilisation to be at hand. Much more important than the change in price is the fact that the Americans appear at length really to have begun buying gold, and foreign exchange convertible into gold, on a substantial scale. There is still a great deal of uncertainty about the quantity of gold they have actually bought; but there seems no doubt that real buying has begun, as it had not even a fortnight ago. Presumably this means that the President and his advisers have realised that the mere declaration of a buying price, without actual purchases at that price, can have an effect only so long as real purchases are believed to be going on. Financial opinion having concluded, on sufficient evidence, that they were not, the policy of forcing down the gold value of the dollar could be maintained only by making actual purchases. Accordingly the United States, in order to lower the value of the dollar, will now proceed to buy gold that is of no use to her, because she has more than enough already, and the gold countries, which also have far more than they need, will be more scared than ever. The effect on gold prices in the world market will continue to be deflationary, and this will largely offset the tendency of the policy to raise prices in the United States. So the financiers go round the mulberry bush!

### German Justice

All is over in the Reichstag Fire trial except the sentences. The final speeches of the prosecution strike a reader at this distance as perfunctory, the work of lawyers who understood that the verdict will be a political act. They asked for the acquittal of all the Bulgarians, but for the death penalty on Van der Lubbe and Torgler. Yet the evidence on which the prosecution relied to associate Torgler with Van der Lubbe was equally good or equally worthless against the Bulgarians. It was that of two Nazi deputies who professed to have seen the whole group together in a dimly lighted passage of the Reichstag on the afternoon of the fire. The utmost, however, that the Chief Public Prosecutor claimed to have proved against Torgler was that he was connected with the fire " in some way or other." This must rank in history as a unique justification for the penalty of death. It is significant that the official Nazi press is already demanding that if Torgler and the Bulgarians should be acquitted the charge of arson they must be retried and sentenced to death for treason. For public opinion outside Germany neither Torgler nor the spirited Dimitrov are on trial. It was evident long ago that there never was a scrap of trustworthy evidence to connect either Torgler or any of the Bulgarians with the fire. A retrospective application of the decree of March 28th (which made arson and treason capital offences) would be a monstrous violation of every principle of law. What is on trial is first of all German justice and then German civilisation.

### The Body and the Shirt

Mr. De Valera is putting to the test his constitutional right to suppress an organisation that he suspects of Fascist tendencies. On Sunday, with some difficulty, General O'Duffy was arrested at Westport while addressing a public demonstration in his blue shirt. To wear it is, of course, a defiance of the Government's ban; but the legality of this ban is likely to be tested in the courts in a Habeas Corpus action. The offence for which the " body " of the prisoner is incarcerated—" to wit, the wearing of a blue shirt "—is presumably one unknown to the law. The case will doubtless give occasion for much legal wit, but it has its grave political importance. Does the right of association extend to this modern practice of forming disciplined quasi-military organisations, distinguished by a uniform? It may be a form of intimidation. It suggests, even if no arms are carried, concerted physical action. The toleration of the Nazi uniform was assuredly the first capital error of the German Republicans. The hearing of the application under Habeas Corpus before Mr. Justice Johnston on Wednesday was adjourned, but it is fairly clear how it will go. The upper ranks of the legal caste are for the Blue Shirts.

### Imperialist Psychology

On Wednesday of last week Lord Snell in the House of Lords raised the question of the administration of the Native Protectorates in South Africa and pleaded that something should be done to aid their development, which has been disgracefully neglected by the British Government. Lord Strathcona, Captain, Yeomen of the Guard, replied on behalf of the British Government. Financially, he explained, the whole situation was governed by the fact that no immediate increase of expenditure was possible except at the expense of the British taxpayer—and it was obviously impossible to ask the British taxpayer to contribute anything for the development of the Native Protectorates. Twenty-four hours later the British Government was forcing through the House of Commons the Newfoundland Bill which is making the British taxpayer contribute £4,000,000 to Newfoundland in order that Newfoundland may pay the £4,000,000 to the speculative purchasers of Newfoundland Bonds. The British taxpayer was at the same time made responsible for at least £20,000,000 of Newfoundland debt. It is not easy to understand the psychology of the True-Blue imperialist!

### Germany and Her Loans

The expected has happened, and the Germans have announced a further reduction in the payments they are prepared to make to their foreign creditors. The full payments are still to be made on the Dawes Loan, and interest, but not amortisation, on the Young Loan; on all other debts, except those to Swiss and Dutch creditors, the amounts transferred are to be reduced to 30 per cent. of what is owing, the rest being credited in " blocked " marks, which are at a heavy discount. This means in effect that the creditors will get about 65 per cent. of what they are owed. Naturally they are angry, because the recent German trade and financial figures do not justify the reduction, and also because of the special treatment of Swiss and Dutch claims. On the latter point, the Germans announce that Switzerland and Holland have made special arrangements to buy more German goods, and that the same method is open to other creditor countries. On the first point, they plead the smallness of their gold and foreign exchange reserves, which have been depleted by paying back the credits advanced by foreign Central Banks through the B.I.S. It is true that these reserves are low; but creditors do not see why Germany should build them up at their expense, especially as they suspect the motives behind the desire for a big gold reserve of being largely military. The fact is, that Germany is deliberately defaulting on her commercial borrowings, and putting her fingers to her nose with an invitation to her creditors to do their worst. What can the creditors do? Nothing; and of this Dr. Schacht is well aware.

### Unemployment Figures

The Ministry of Labour has just issued some interesting figures dealing with the shifts in the volume of employment during the past ten years. Between June, 1923 and June, 1933, the total numbers insured against unemployment rose by 15.4 per cent., and the total numbers employed by 5 per cent. Thus employment in general had not increased nearly enough to absorb the new entrants into industry, despite the efforts of the enlarged pensions scheme in removing workers over sixty-five years old from the range of insurance. As between industries and occupations there have been enormous changes. The numbers actually employed in coal mining have fallen, over the ten years, by nearly 46 per cent., in ship-building by nearly 55 per cent., in steel by 37 per cent. and in engineering by over 21 per cent. In the woollen industry there has been a fall of 18 per cent., and in cotton of 15 per cent. On the other hand employment in the silk and artificial silk trades has risen by 73 per cent., and in the electrical apparatus trades by 68 per cent. The distributive trades are up by 52 per cent., and hotels and restaurants by 50 per cent.; the motor trades by 28 per cent. and public works contracting by nearly 60 per cent. Building, however, records a rise of under 19 per cent. In general the shift is from the old basic industries to newer and more diversified light industries, and from directly productive work to distribution and the public services, though among these last railways and the government service have drastically reduced their personnel.

### Another Tariff Device

The United States, having adopted a quota policy for the admission of intoxicating liquor after the repeal of Prohibition, is now said to be contemplating its use as an instrument for bilateral commercial bargaining on a wider scale. In fixing the quotas for imported wines and spirits, the opportunity has been seized to drive bargains for the acceptance in return of American commodities; and the trouble that has arisen over this with the French is being used by other wine-exporting countries as a chance of getting part of the French quota transferred to themselves. From us the Americans are asking, most inconveniently, for a larger admission of pig products, presumably at the expense of the unfortunate Danes. This method of bilateral bargaining is of course now familiar in Europe. It has just been tightened up again by France, and the Germans are making extensive use of it in their efforts to push their exports in the world market. Under existing conditions of a greatly restricted total volume of foreign trade, its consequences are most unhappy for those countries which cling to some shadow of the free trade system; but it looks as if it will be increasingly used, as conditions improve, as a method of tariff bargaining in countries which are experimenting with some form of "planned economy."

### The School Age

Last week the *Times* printed a letter, signed by a number of leaders of educational opinion in Oxford, in favour of an immediate raising of the school-leaving age to fifteen. Until this is done, the signatories rightly point out, it is quite impossible for local education authorities to carry through in any satisfactory way the reforms in post-primary education recommended in the Hadow Report, and nominally accepted as the basis of our educational policy. The essence of the Hadow plan is that every normal child shall pass through a form of secondary education after reaching the age of eleven; and this post-primary type of education cannot be properly organised over less than four years. As long as the raising of the school-leaving age is held up, local authorities will be held up in carrying out schemes of reorganisation; and the less advanced authorities may easily be induced, in the name of "economy," to adopt schemes conceived on the wrong lines, and thus to do damage which it will take many years to repair. It is absurd to pretend that this educational reform, already long overdue, ought still to be held up by the "financial crisis." It is to be hoped that friends of education all over the country will follow up this Oxford letter with renewed pressure on the Government.

### "Till the Pips Squeak"

Most politicians have a thing or two in their past that they would like forgotten, and we had hardly thought Sir Eric Geddes, author of the famous phrase, "squeezing Germany like a lemon till the pips squeak," could be an exception to the rule. The episode took place at Cambridge in 1918, and it was described by Mr. Keynes in *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* as "the grossest" spectacle" of the Khaki election campaign. But last week, on the fifteenth birthday of this speech, Sir Eric Geddes wrote a full-dress letter to the *Times*—not to excuse it, but to glory in it. He confirms, as history has confirmed, Mr. Keynes's predictions of the disastrous results of attempting to apply this lemon-squeezing policy. But, he says, "I told you so." I suggested, in effect, that Germany "could not pay vast indemnities without damage to the receivers." And so he did, a week or two earlier; but when that led to his being called "weak-kneed" and "pro-German," he changed his tune and, as he puts it in the *Times*, "fell upon the picturesque phrase about the lemon." He is not ashamed of the phrase; he recalls it "with a touch of pride." He only complains that it is "invariably taken out of its context." For ourselves, we cannot find anything in Sir Eric's explanations that justifies either his complaint or his pride.

# LORDS AND JACOBINS

In the far-off days when revolutionary France was thought to threaten the British Constitution, its defenders could afford to make long noses at their adversary. What confidence and what contempt inspired the satirical stanzas of the *Anti-Jacobin* !

> See the level of Freedom sweeps over the land—
> The vile Aristocracy's doom is at hand !
> Not a seat shall be left in a House that we know,
> But for *Earl* Buonaparte and *Baron* Moreau.
> But the rights of the Commons shall still be respected,
> Buonaparte himself shall approve the elected ;
> And the Speaker shall march with majestical mien,
> And make his three bows to the grave Guillotine.

But water has flowed under the bridges since then. The suffrage has been extended ; proud peers must be respectful to the masses—they must even pay homage to democracy since their more plebeian leaders have constituted themselves its champions. Moreover, the " House that we know," if it has grown in numbers, has diminished in strength. It was shorn heavily of its powers by the Liberals in 1911 ; it now sees itself menaced by still more formidable antagonists. The enemy is no longer across the Straits of Dover ; he is here—millions of him, from John o' Groats to Land's End. And so those who aim at mending the House of Lords, in order to save it from being ended, must walk delicately like Agag.

Lord Salisbury, in the plan he unfolded this week, was cautious—or at least he thought he was. But alas ! he has not got his fellow Agags into step. Some of them would prefer to leave well alone. This is not because they regard the Lords with indifference, or with the mild affection felt for an ancient monument or a picturesque survival, such as the Lord Mayor's Show. On the contrary, they argue with a considerable show of reason that the House of Lords, enfeebled though it has been by the Parliament Act, is still adequate to the task of checking any serious advance in the direction of Socialism. The militants, on the other hand, who want positive reform—or reaction—are divided on the question of the hereditary principle. Lord Salisbury naturally believes in this principle, and he retains it in a diluted but effective form in his scheme. The Chamber that he proposes would consist of 300 odd members, instead of 745 as at present. Of these, 150 (as in Lord Clarendon's abortive scheme of five years ago) would be hereditary peers elected by their own Order. To balance them there is an " outside element " of another 150, chosen in some way which is not clear. And, finally, the grand total is brought up to about 330 by the inclusion of the Princes of the Blood Royal, some of the Bishops and the Law Lords. This, says Lord Salisbury, would be a really efficient Second Chamber. It would, indeed—on his interpretation of the word " efficiency," and with the added powers which he desires to give it. Those powers are the right of the House of Lords to delay any measure other than a purely financial Bill until after the next general election, and the right to take part, through a Joint Committee of Lords and Commons, in deciding what is and what is not a financial Bill. Thus the Parliament Act, as Lord Salisbury ingenuously suggested, would not be repealed, and the authority of the House of Commons over money matters would not be questioned, but any revolutionary project camouflaged as a financial measure would be nipped in the bud. Quite !

The effect and the purpose of this " political imposture," as Lord Ponsonby called it, are perfectly clear. It would immensely strengthen the House of Lords as an engine of the Conservative Party. The clearing out of the " backwoodsmen " would do nobody any harm ; it would, indeed, end a silly farce. It would also give the hereditary principle a more respectable air, though why any man of sense to-day, be he democrat or aristocrat, should see particular virtue in a body of 150 hereditary " nobles," we do not know. Why not 150 hereditary farmers, fishmongers or stockbrokers ? But, of course, among the 150 hereditary peers there would be an overwhelming Tory majority, which would be still further increased by the Bishops and Law Lords. And does anyone imagine that representatives of Labour and Liberalism would preponderate in the " outside element " ? Thus we should have a consolidation of the present position, in which, with the Conservatives in office, two-chamber government is a hollow pretence, whilst with Labour in it becomes a pitched battle—or, if you prefer it, a gamble with the dice always loaded on the Tory side. As for Lord Salisbury's motive, he makes no secret of it. It is fear—fear of the encroachment of the Labour Party on privilege and property in a more determined spirit than it has yet shown. Does not that sinister fellow, Sir Stafford Cripps, make your flesh creep ? asks Lord Salisbury. Can you hesitate, in face of his utterances, to save the country from the peril that hangs over it ? It is true that the peril in question threatens not " the country " but only a very limited portion of it. It is true also that Sir Stafford Cripps and his fellow revolutionaries protest that they are no Jacobins aiming at the destruction of the constitution, but honest democrats intent on preserving and improving it. The fact remains, however, that they are Socialists who mean business. And since the House of Lords and the Conservative Party do not mean business—or, at any rate, mean a very different kind of business—there is reasonable ground for the alarm in Belgravia, and there is little sense in toying with amiable compromises. There was a time, and not so very long ago, when many democrats were content to leave the House of Lords alone. They regarded it in the spirit of the song in *Iolanthe* :

> When Wellington thrashed Bonaparte
>   As every child can tell,
> The House of Peers, throughout the war,
> Did nothing in particular,
>   And did it very well . . .

So long as the Lords continued to do nothing in particular, it was possible to be pleased if they did it well, and undisturbed if they did it badly. But let this House become not a " played-out anachronism," as Mr. Wiston Churchill called it in his naughtier days, but a lively and mischievous anachronism, and the case is altered. Then only two courses are open. Either it must be turned into a decent Second Chamber, which means something quite different from Lord Salisbury's chimaera, or it must be abolished out of hand.

What is the function of a Second Chamber ? It was defined by the Bryce Report some fifteen years ago as " the interposition of so much delay (and no more) in the passing of a Bill into law as may be needed to enable the opinion of the nation to be adequately expressed upon it."

But in practice our own experience and that of other countries shows that this is not how Second Chambers ordinarily work out. They tend inevitably to be reactionary in a greater or less degree, and their powers of delay are used, in fact, as powers of obstruction. And do we, in truth, in this country need any more machinery for the delay of legislation? There is plenty to be done in the way of reforms of procedure in the House of Commons, but more outside checks on its activity are not one of them. There may be justification for a Second Chamber in a country with a Federal constitution, such as the U.S.A. or Soviet Russia, where it is desired to give special representation to the separate States. In a unitary State of our kind there is none. Your Upper House, whether oligarchic like the present House of Lords or elected on some fancy democratic system, will come into conflict with the popular Chamber, or it will be a superfluity. That is the answer to the advocates of delay, revision, and so on. As for Lord Salisbury's arguments, in the normal course of events no anti-revolutionary precautions are wanted, since a Labour Government, so far as we know, proposes to shape its measures only in accordance with a clear and strong popular mandate, and a House of Lords, reformed or unreformed, cannot claim the right to oppose that. If what is envisaged is a real Revolution, then the House of Lords will be about as good a bulwark against it as a sick headache. For our part, therefore, we should not hesitate to vote for the abolition of the House of Lords, and we can see no advantage, either under a Socialist or even under a democratic Liberal regime, in substituting for it any kind of Second Chamber.

Lord Salisbury's plan will, no doubt, be consigned to limbo, as its various predecessors have been. Only 84 out of the whole host of peers could be found to vote for its first reading. There is no enthusiasm for it among Conservatives in the country. The Government have not committed themselves, and they evidently have no intention of backing so certain a loser as this. But the Anti-Jacobins are still determined; there will be more plans for strengthening the House of Lords. And each of them as it appears will confirm democrats and Socialists in the conviction that ending and not mending is the right policy.

## RECOGNITION OF THE FAR EAST

Moscow, December, 1933.

STATE Department officials showed Litvinov a number of documents proving that Woodrow Wilson sent General Graves with troops to Siberia in 1918 not to fight the Bolsheviks but to check the imperialistic plans of Japan on the Asiatic Continent. Litvinov had known this all the time. General Graves had said it in his *America's Siberian Adventure*. Others had said it too. The State Department archives revealed nothing new to Litvinov, but the fact that this dossier was unsealed for his benefit, and the fact that in consideration of America's anti-Japanese intentions in 1918 he renounced a Soviet counterclaim is of tremendous significance. For Litvinov, the dropping of a counter-claim was a gesture towards Soviet-American friendship; to the State Department it must have been clear that the Commissar would put only one interpretation on the opening of its files: that Washington was still anti-Japanese and wanted Moscow to know it.

When the President and the Commissar discussed Siberia in 1918, they naturally had to discuss Japan in 1933. I have reason to believe they did. Unlike some capitalist states the Soviet Union is not interfering in Chinese domestic affairs. Moscow wants to see a strong, united China, and, although the prospects of such a development are slim indeed, its policy in this regard corresponds with that of the United States. President Roosevelt knows that in most other respects, too, Russia's attitude towards Far Eastern affairs is very much like his own. The State Department, accordingly, may take it for granted that in any future test of diplomatic strength with Japan the Kremlin will be disposed to manifest greater sympathy for America's position than for Japan's.

There is evidence that the Roosevelt-Litvinov understanding and recognition have had the desired effect in Japan. Premier Saito and the clique around the Mikado have been encouraged by the assumption of diplomatic relations between America and Russia. Their struggle against General Araki, the Japanese War Minister, and the military Fascists is far from won, but they mustered up enough courage a few weeks ago to start a campaign among the industrialists and merchants of Japan for support for their moderate "Shidehara policy" in foreign affairs. To the extent that the civilian elements in Tokio gain in the tug against war with the mad militarists, Soviet and American security grows.

Two considerations can strengthen the advocates of peace in Japan and reduce the threat of war in the Pacific. They are: Soviet-American co-operation, and the reinforcement of Russia's defences. U.S. recognition has increased Soviet prestige and indicated to the Japanese that in the event of their attack on Siberia there would be at least a chance that Russian-American trade might expand. Immediately after recognition was announced Yureniev, the Soviet Ambassador to Japan, issued a statement emphasising the significance of a *rapprochement* between two nations with 290,000,000 inhabitants in consolidating world peace. "The Japanese," writes the *Times* Tokio correspondent, "who lie geographically between the two nations, are not likely to miss the point." The question of war or peace in the Far East during the next year or two will be determined by the result of the inner political conflict in Japan, and the more Japanese who see Yureniev's point the weaker Araki's case becomes. For in the final analysis, the military Fascists must be able to say to the nation: If we attack the Russians we can beat them; if we attack the Americans we can beat them. But as Russians and Americans draw closer together this assertion carries less conviction. If Japan were in a situation like Germany's, a foreign union might be wind in the sails of the reactionaries. Japan, however, is not a defeated nation surrounded by enemies. Mr. Roosevelt made a clever move on the eve of recognition; he ordered part of the U.S. fleet to be withdrawn from the Pacific. Had he kept the fleet there and recognised Russia, the Japanese might have been alarmed, and alarm is the stuff on which militarists flourish. But the transfer of some naval strength to the Atlantic reassured Tokio diplomats on America's peaceful mood and helped the Japanese civilians somewhat to resist the big army and big navy men's raid on the exchequer. Then Soviet recognition, a cheaper and more effective form of pressure on Japan than battleships, brought home to a large number of Japanese that it was impossible to crush both America and Russia.

To-day, Japanese diplomacy is in retreat before the Soviet Union. The retreat commenced late in September when Gregory Sokolnikov, assistant Foreign Commissar for Far Eastern affairs, told Ota, the Japanese Ambassador in Moscow, that Japan would be held responsible for all anti-Soviet acts in Manchuria and that Manchukuo was a Nipponese puppet. The Moscow press thereupon launched into violent attacks on Japanese imperialism and explained that the Kremlin had no intention of making any further reductions in the selling price of the Chinese Eastern Railway. On October 9th the Soviet newspapers broke all precedents by publishing a series of secret Japanese documents revealing Japanese anti-Soviet plans. Japan did not reply. During the period of the anniversary celebrations in November, Bolshevik placards, spokesmen and dailies, now usually very guarded in their references to foreign policy, frankly branded Japan as an aggressive and militaristic nation. Finally, when a squadron of Japanese bombers and scout planes flew over Siberian territory on November 3rd, Moscow warned Tokio that the next time this happened the aeroplanes would be fired at. The Japanese have been taken aback by this sudden reversal of Moscow's mild and insult-swallowing policy of the last two years. When Ota asked what it all meant, a Soviet publicist said it meant just one word: "Stop." The Bolsheviks have called Japan to a halt. The new Soviet firmness *vis-à-vis* Japan is easily accounted for. The country is now in a confident mood. The harvest was good. Collectivisation is definitely established. Industrialisation makes steady progress. The Bolsheviks have not the slightest doubt that their army is better than the Japanese in fighting spirit and mechanical equipment; that Japan's army never encountered a major Western force, and that it exhibited its poor offensive qualities at Shanghai, while the Red Army has been tested in the fire of battle and proved its worth; that the Red Air Force is stronger than Japan's and could bombard Japanese cities, while Japanese planes could never reach important Soviet population centres; that Russia's war industries for the manufacture of tanks, automobiles, aeroplane motors, guns, etc., are superior to Japan's; that the U.S.S.R. stands far ahead of Japan as a heavy-industrial nation; that despite the weakness of the Soviet fleet infantry and aeroplanes could repulse any Japanese attack on Vladivostok; and, to sum up, that Japan could not win a war against the Soviet Union. The Trans-Siberian railway is a weak link, but the Soviet Government is constructing another line from Orenburg to Orsk to Stalinsk to Minusinsk and crossing the Trans-Siberian at Taischet-Kirensk, and is probably building other railroads as well as motor highways on which information is not available. Moreover, Moscow has practically completed its programme of creating a Far Eastern military autarchy which makes the Khabarovsk region largely independent of European Russia as far as ammunition, clothing, food, and soldiers are concerned.

The Japanese know all about these developments and are trimming their diplomatic sails accordingly. For two years, from September, 1931, when Japan suddenly descended upon sleeping Mukden, to September, 1933, the Bolsheviks persisted in a painful policy of patient tolerance. Several times they offered Tokio a non-aggression pact. Tokio refused; "we need a free hand," Koki Hirota, now Japanese Foreign Minister, said to me. The Bolsheviks offered Japan a commercial treaty. Japan refused. The Bolsheviks suggested the exchange of trade and good-will delegations. Japan did not react seriously. The Bolsheviks proposed the sale of the Chinese Eastern. Japan assumed that Moscow had decided to cede the railway and was only asking for a nominal selling price in order to "save face." Finally, when the Japanese began to arrest Soviet officials of the C.E.R. and prepared to seize the railroad, Moscow banged down its mailed fist—mailed during two years of intensive activity in Siberia—and declared: "We have had enough." The Japanese understood this kind of language where they had not understood the language of peace and conciliation.

The resulting Japanese diplomatic retreat commenced before President Roosevelt took the first steps towards Soviet recognition. But that retreat has now been hastened by recognition. The retreat, and Litvinov's stay in America have helped the Russians to give more definite shape to their Far Eastern policy. This may now be roughly outlined. Moscow will sell the Chinese Eastern for what it is worth, say $100,000,000 in gold. Moscow, however, will not recognise Manchukuo *de jure* except under exceptional circumstances. Recognition of Manchukuo would prejudice the territorial integrity of China, a principle to which the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. Government are equally committed. The non-recognition of Manchukuo, however, must not be taken to mean that Russia is interested in a sphere of influence in Northern Manchuria. The Soviet Union has definitely renounced that sphere of influence. In 1926, Japan proposed to Moscow the division of Manchuria into Japanese and Soviet spheres. Moscow rejected this imperialistic suggestion seven years ago, and still abhors anything that smacks of it. Moscow is out of Manchuria and is reconciled to having Japan as a land neighbour entrenched in Manchukuo. When I asked a maker of Soviet foreign policy why, if that is the case, they should not recognise Manchukuo, he said: "Why should we? We are thinking of China." I suspect they are also thinking of America, which is violently opposed to Manchukuoan recognition. There is, moreover, no reason why Bolsheviks should give legal sanction to the violent seizure of semi-colonial territory. Some time ago, perhaps, the Kremlin might have recognised Manchukuo as part of the aftermath of a Soviet-Japanese non-aggression pact, but the new ratio of military power in the Far East and the establishment of Russian-American diplomatic relations has somewhat modified that attitude. Perhaps Moscow will now sign such a pact if Tokio strongly urges it. The Soviet Government wants peace with Japan. Russia has absolutely nothing to gain and everything to lose from war. But the past has convinced the Soviet Government that a mild, moderate and humble attitude is not conducive to peace. The United States Government probably takes the same view of the non-aggression pact which Japan has offered it.

Russia's new military strength in Siberia coupled with the incipient Soviet-American *rapprochement* is a guarantee of Far Eastern peace. The worst threat to that peace is the Japanese Fascist movement which seeks to make capital out of a most difficult economic situation. The Japanese army and navy will spend 875 million yen in 1934 out of a total federal budget of 2,017 million yen—43.3 per cent. Instead of allocating more money for the relief of peasants and industries the reactionaries are asking for additional military expenditures. Politicians who do not comply help their assassins to become national heroes. The atmosphere in Japan is electric with possibilities of violent change. U.S. recognition of Russia has served notice on the military hotheads that no matter what they do at home they must be more circumspect abroad. France, Russia's new friend, is likewise interested in diminishing the war danger in the Pacific, and should take steps to remind Japan, in very concrete fashion, of that interest. Ultimately, the Powers may have to get together to save Japan from her social-economic-territorial dilemma and from herself. For if she attacks Russia she may break her neck, and that would have disastrous world consequences. But it is probably too much to hope that the bourgeois nations, who to-day watch the Franco-German problem, which has already provoked two wars, prepare the field for a third, will have enough sense to safeguard the capitalist system from a serious body blow in Eastern Asia. Communist Russia must do it, and capitalist America will assist her in doing it. Moscow's new firm policy *vis-à-vis* Japan is the best thing for Japan and the best means of improving Soviet-Japanese relations. LOUIS FISCHER

## DENMARK AND THE BACON QUOTA

THE refusal of the Danish Government to accept a voluntary reduction in the Bacon Quota looks at first sight like an exhibition of obstinacy and unreadiness for compromise unworthy of a long record of friendly relations. Such a judgment, however, would be unfair, since it fails to allow for the real difficulties of the Danish position.

Danish agriculture has been built, and for years it has seemed built unshakably, on two things—a prosperous industrial population in Great Britain, and to a lesser extent in Germany, and free access (relatively free in the case of Germany) to both these markets. The home market was unimportant. The presence of constantly expanding foreign markets with a high price level has led to costly and highly capitalised production. Returns were high enough to make profitable almost any expenditure which would increase the output of the limited Danish acreage and the relatively unfavourable Danish soil and climate, and the result was the much admired technical development of the last quarter of a century. Much of this was carried out—justifiably enough—on borrowed capital. Further, prosperity itself made farming attractive. Estates were broken up to meet the demand for smallholdings—a process agreeable to the social policy of the Government—farms changed hands frequently and at a premium. Much land is consequently mortgaged or subject to instalment payments either to the State or a private institution.

Danish agriculture has been caught by the slump in its cruellest form. The Danish farmer faces not only a drastic fall in prices, but the prospect of a growing measure of exclusion from his only markets, the markets for which he has built up his industry and on which he has depended for nearly two generations. No hopeful alternatives present themselves either at home or abroad. It is not surprising to learn that payment of interest, loan instalments and taxes have all slowed down, and that, on a rough estimate, 20 per cent. of the farms are actually insolvent.

Some adjustments have been attempted. A mere delay in the payment of all farm debts and fixed charges is no permanent or desirable solution. The use of savings has its limits. A reduction of costs by a reduced use of imported feeding stuffs, reduced feeding and consequent milk yield with increased tillage is a genuine economy. The State has intervened to reduce taxation, to suspend for two years all payments due to credit institutions and to reduce the rate of interest on farm loans. The benefit of the latter provision is somewhat lessened by the circumstance that the capital of credit institutions is principally derived from farmers' deposits.

So much for the farmers' outgoings. On the other side of the account the Danish farmer has relied for many years past on a co-operative marketing system which is famous throughout the world. It may be said at once that, as a business institution, this system—admirably efficient and financially flexible—has withstood without a crack the strain of the last few years, and, were its aims merely commercial and self-sufficing, it might well continue to function unmodified. Its purpose, however, is not its own business success, but the prosperity of its farmer members, and to preserve what remains of this a wholesale revision of production was needed. Bacon was handled first. For some time a Union of Bacon Factories had existed for advisory and general purposes. In November, 1932, it was laid down that all bacon exported to England must be sold through the Union, which thus became the agent for sixty-two co-operative and twenty-three private factories. Bacon was purchased at a fixed weekly price and the full quota sold week by week to England, the remainder being disposed of, frequently at a loss, to other countries. Sales on the home market were left untouched.

Such a scheme would be financially unworkable without two further provisions—price equalisation and limitation of production. The first is achieved by a levy of 2 krone on every pig slaughtered, which is used to make the price of all exported pigs up to English level. Reduction of output was applied first to the factories, the quota being allocated weekly among them. Cuts were severe, amounting sometimes to as much as 50 per cent., but seemed to be justified by an almost equal rise in prices. Regulation of factory output was not, however, sufficient if the individual producer was to be left unfettered, and in April of this year a regulation was introduced fixing a permitted output for each of the 220,000 Danish pig producers. The figure is based in each case on eighteen different factors, including last year's production, value and area of farm, number of cows kept, skim milk available, etc. Tickets are issued for every authorised pig, and pigs without tickets are accepted only at half price. It was hoped to provide in this way for a total reduction of about 20 per cent.

The mechanical problems of adjustment have been handled with competence and speed, but there are limits—brought nearer with every successive shrinkage of the British market—beyond which mere adjustment cannot hope to secure the survival of the Danish farmer, or, more accurately, of the Danish dairyman-pigkeeper, who has for long been a valued citizen of the agricultural world. His survival turns upon three factors: the costs of production, the discovery of other than British markets, and the level of world prices. Something has been done to reduce costs by methods already described, as well as by the work of co-operative supply organisations, but it is doubtful if the co-operative system of one country alone can reduce the price level of consumable goods—the combined living and producing costs—to a level which would make production profitable at the present level of world prices.

The search for alternative markets abroad seems valueless at the outset, for there, too, the world price level rules. Something may and probably will be done with the home market, where a certain limited margin of margarine consumption and imported food may be eliminated to the farmers' benefit. The limitation, however, is known, and there remains only the hope of a restoration of world prices to something approaching their old level. Failing that, Danish farming, in the opinion of good authorities, may survive in its present form for perhaps another two years. After that, change, technical, commercial, probably also fiscal, is almost inevitable. Reliance on internationalism and free trade, more especially the free trade and internationalism of Great Britain, has failed, and Denmark may yet see a reversion to subsistence farming, coupled with the intensive cultivation of a highly protected home market and a national economy approximating to that of the other Scandinavian countries. Such a change would involve the scrapping of much plant, capital, acquired knowledge and experience, as well as much individual hardship. The Danish co-operative system, it may be assumed, would carry through its task with the maximum of efficiency and the minimum of loss, but it is natural that the Danish people should only accept under protest each step which pushes them nearer this extremity.

## WISE MEN FROM THE WEST

THE Wise Men from the East, we're told,
Laid down frankincense, myrrh, and gold,
  The emblems of their power and pride,
As offerings to the Child Whose birth
Should bring to all men peace on earth;
Then, humbly, with a sober mirth,
  They went their way, well satisfied.

And as I read the tale, it seemed
Sleep stole upon me and I dreamed
  That Wise Men from the West had come
To where a poor man's baby lay,
Born, amid fears, on Christmas Day,
While all the world, in blank dismay,
  Sat listening for the war-god's drum.

And there I dreamed that down they cast
All tokens of their conflicts past,
  And those they feared, and those they planned:
Gas-mask and rifle, bomb and shell
In one sublime confusion fell,
With many a shrewd device as well
  For trenches one day to be manned.

Then, humbly, there they laid aside
All schemes of national greed or pride,
  All grudges that revenge should slake;
Content, if so they might but clear
From each new life the numbing fear
That buys their " policies " too dear—
  Tell me, Wise Men, if I must wake?

MACFLECKNOE

# AN APOLOGY FOR TOYS

THERE are many people who would like to see Christmas abolished. For one thing it falls in a peculiarly unpleasant season—the dead end of the year—a month the most niggardly of flower and song. They look forward to its festivities with as little pleasure as they would feel if they were compelled to accept an invitation to a garden party in February. One of the worst things about Christmas in their eyes is that the festivities are all but compulsory. They see themselves as decent honest human beings who are forced on Christmas morning to assume a grimace of good will and to give and accept presents that they would gladly consign to an incinerator. Tradition insists that they must go through the day acting a lie, pretending to be jolly because they are eating a dinner such as no sane man eats on any other day of the year and looking like a circle of intoxicated village idiots under paper caps out of crackers.

Nor is there any escape from this. If they go out in the afternoon, it is into semi-inanimate streets. Never does London look more dismal than to a solitary man tramping its pavements on Christmas Day. Even the theatres are closed. The few buses are sparsely filled with miserable-faced people who look as if they had nowhere to go. There are no newspapers even to tell who won at White Hart Lane. In the evening, it is true, there are hotels and restaurants that invite the stranger to the enjoyment of a typical old-fashioned Christmas dinner. But, appalling as Christmas in the bosom of the family may be, the ghastly gaieties of Christmas as a cabaret-show in a hotel are a thousand times worse. It is all make-believe in either case. Dullness is secure on his throne till Boxing Day is over.

It seems to me that the enemies of Christmas have got hold of the wrong end of the philosophical stick. The fact that the date of Christmas falls in the starveling world of December is to my mind symbolic of the imaginative magnificence of man. There would be no great credit in the celebration of plenty during the plenty of summer. For man to affirm his belief in plenty during the barren evening of the year, however, is an act of faith which enables him to go on living and to go on enjoying being alive. Deep in his being, he remembers that it is to his original poverty, nakedness, and helplessness that he owes his supremacy in the world of living creatures. It was his wants that drove him forward to increasing greatness. Poor in possessions in which other animals were rich, he imagined things beyond the circumference of his poverty and so attained riches beyond the lions and the eagles. Lacking a coat of fur or feathers, he dreamed dreams that prepared the way for the dressmakers of Bond Street and the tailors of Savile Row. Lacking claws and teeth that could compete with the claws and teeth of wild beasts, he forged a simple weapon that was the forerunner of those noble armaments that could blot out a civilisation in a night. Unable to fly, he played with the vision of surpassing the birds in their own element, so that at the present day he is able to fly higher, faster and farther than a swallow. A poor swimmer, he cast his imagination into a monster of the deep, and can now dive down to the under-sea roots of the mountains like a whale, and make longer voyages beneath the surface of the tides than the eels during the season of their migration. Bound by his necessities to a few square miles of earth, he saw in his mind's eye far-off countries clothed in miracles—islands beyond the sunset—and he had only to wait a few thousand years till the Poles were discovered. He found his fields miserly of grain, his flocks perishing of disease or preyed upon by wild beasts, and his tribes attacked by savage enemies; so that to compensate himself for this he had to invent that mighty toy, the Golden Age, and lo!—unless we are too mad to understand and make it ours—the Golden Age is approaching. Poverty, sickness, hunger and the death of friends afflicted him, and his imagination flew in the night beyond the stars and discovered Paradise.

Most of our Christmas festivities seem to me in the same way to be marks of the eternal human refusal to accept things as they are. The poor home ceases to be poor when the children on the floor play with enravishment with a cheap doll, a fragile Noah's Ark, a sixpenny mechanical man who turns somersaults, and a handful of toys disgorged by Christmas crackers. What greater symbol of the cornucopia of the living world has there ever been than a Noah's Ark? Here is all Eden in a box, and, more than Eden, the wide waters of the ocean. No longer is the child possessor's experience of the animal creation limited to the household cat, the milkman's pony, and the sparrows that quarrel in the street. It is now enlarged to hold all Africa and its prodigies. Life marches on the floor in a splendid procession of horses, cows, lions, giraffes, and doves, and all the living creatures that the heart of man can desire. Here, if anywhere, is God's plenty. To-morrow the star of poverty will shed its thin light on a starveling world again, but to-day is lit up with the glory of abundance. The Christmas tree is equally a figure of abundance. Those tinselled toys that hang among its branches may be worth little individually, but what a magnificent excess of them there is! What an alphabet of variety and prettiness among the coloured candles that for one evening of the year at least bring into the room a wonder beyond the wonder of the stars! We cannot dismiss the richer, fuller life that the child lives in presence of this spectacle as trivial make-believe. If this is trivial make-believe, then the whole imaginative life of man, with its poetry, its art and its music, is trivial make-believe. All poetry springs from the desire to break through the confines of everyday experiences and conquer richer territories of experience through the imagination.

The toys of Christmas and the food of Christmas alike take the imagination on its travels. The flaxen hair and the waxen cheeks of the doll, distressing though they are to the aesthetic observer, are the counters of a beauty that turns the drabbest home into an enchanted castle. The balloon fills the air with skiey wonders. The toy monkey—I don't know what the toy monkey does, but I imagine that it gives life that rich, grotesque decoration that makes it so eternally amusing. Anyhow, in the presence of toys, the world ceases to be a place of want and becomes a place of more possessions than one knows what to do with. As for food, what a suggestion of superfluity there is in the sight of a cake! Even a cake bought from a grocer's shop—a cake from which the fastidious would shrink if it were offered to them during a famine—can bring such joy into the eyes of a child as no ambrosia ever brought into the eyes of an immortal. As for turkey, its very monstrosity of size, I think, must be one of its greatest attractions. On common days, a small bird—a chicken or a pheasant—is well enough; but for Christmas we instinctively choose the giant birds—the turkey and the goose—creatures that in their very physical appearance are a denial of shortage. Enough may be as good as a feast during the working months, but on one day of the year we like to see too much on the table. On this day, everything must be provided with a lavish hand. The fertility of the sacred wood is brought into the house with the mistletoe, and the cheerful fruitage of the holly mocks at the barrenness of the season. The passion for the display of excess is shown in the double offering of plum-pudding and mince-pies. It is food for a glutton, wonderful to look at, terrible to force into a small frame already packed with turkey, sausage stuffing, potatoes and Brussels sprouts. Yet there is more to come—dishes of fruits more magical in their variety than any Maeldune discovered on the trees of enchanted islands, almonds and raisins, and chocolates in silver cups. And wines—how they bring the royal atmosphere of excess even into the poor home on Christmas Day! On Christmas Day there is port, or rather, perhaps, imitation port, drunk in many of the homes of England that would be rejected as medicine by cattle. It is the only day of the year in which a bottle of so-called port appears in many houses. And with what relish its sickly sweetness is sipped and swallowed! Cheeks glow and eyes brighten at the beautiful idea of the thing. If it were a teetotal drink, no honest man would offer it to his neighbour—no man, having tasted it, could retain the giver as his friend. Yet, since wine is a symbol of excess, of exaltation above the common mood, even the foulest imitation port becomes temporarily nectar. It is not a drink; it is a dream; and we are no more than half-alive without dreams.

This being so, I think it is a little inhuman to object to the Christmas festivities. They satisfy the hunger of the starved life; and nearly every life is to some extent a starved life. Our experience is more limited than we like it to be. Hence we are always reaching after an extension of experience through the imagination. Books, theatres, cinemas, help us to this. They bring plenty—or, at least, we hope they will bring plenty—into a niggardly world. The fairy-tales, multiplying the inhabitants of earth and air, and giving them an excess of beauty or an excess of grotesqueness, do this for children. And so do toys. And so do turkey and plum-pudding. You and I may be bored on Christmas Day—though I hope not—but millions of people will be eating and enjoying—nay, gorging and guzzling—on the fruits of the Tree of Life.

Y. Y.

St. Augustine's, Haggerston.—Priest wanted. Preferably a Football Blue who (1) says his prayers, (2) likes work, (3) is extreme, but (4) is not a Roman Catholic.—Advert. in *Church Times*, under heading "Clerical."

* * *

Sir Archibald Bodkin, the former Director of Public Prosecutions, said last night: "Anything more outrageous than coupling the names of the King-Emperor with Mahatma Gandhi, and to ask for God's blessing on both, cannot possibly be imagined."—Reported in daily papers.

* * *

It may, of course, be argued that it would be unfair for the existing Government to take advantage of its present powers and to set up a bulwark against Socialist legislation. That is the kind of argument which appeals to the man who thinks that fair play consists in always giving your own side out—a strange conception of fair play which is by no means uncommon.—Mr. Harold Cox on "House of Lords Reform," in *Sunday Times*.

* * *

Why cannot the British Empire cease all its peace-time overtures, cease trying to get co-operation from other nations who gladly would belittle the British Empire if they dared, and think of their own homes and requirements, the great army of young men coming forward, and undertake from now on, irrespective of any half-hearted disarmament proposal, the great task of establishing the Navy and other branches of His Majesty's forces for the betterment of the British people of all classes in the provision of work affecting the branches of business which shipbuilding covers?—Mr. James Mahood, master of the Belfast Workhouse, reported in *Northern Whig and Belfast Post*.

* * *

Lord Ponsonby got in a pretty shrewd stroke at Lord Londonderry when he quoted a previous speech of that Noble Lord in which he said that along the road of reduction and limitation the ultimate abolition of war between nations was to be found. That is one of those pious fallacies which sound so well and are so misleading. Abolish all armament and you reduce nations to fighting with claws and teeth. And that is the most deadly of all warfare.—*The Aeroplane*.

* * *

I read the *Morning Post* because a thousand years' tradition can't be wrong.—Advert. in Press.

# Correspondence

## A POLICY FOR GREAT BRITAIN

SIR,—The German withdrawal from the League of Nations and the recent criticisms of the League by the Italian Government place this country in a position where it must choose between alternative policies; one fatal and bound in the end to lead to war, the other perilous perhaps, yet ultimately affording a prospect of permanent peace. The fatal policy is to attempt merely to postpone war, and so to drift back to the international anarchy of the years before 1914. The perilous but hopeful policy is to move forward by strengthening the collective peace system. This can only be achieved by a bold act of initiative on the part of the British Government, whose lead is likely to be followed.

Our Government should seize this opportunity to put openly before the world an acceptable and effective programme of joint action for the organisation of peace. The principles of this programme should be:

1. An engagement by all nations to implement the Kellogg Pact as binding them never to resort to force as an instrument of national policy, and to settle all disputes by pacific means.

2. The reaffirmation by all nations that they are willing to consider through recognised channels (in particular under Article XIX of the Covenant) any submission for the revision of existing treaties which may be causing a grievance to any nation.

3. The defining of an aggressor as that nation which resorts to force and refuses to submit the issue in dispute to pacific settlement.

4. The acceptance of the following stages for bringing pressure to bear, if necessary, on an aggressor or on a nation breaking the Disarmament Convention:

(*a*) Moral and political pressure through the gradual cessation of diplomatic contacts with the aggressor.

(*b*) Refusal of loans and munitions to the aggressor.

(*c*) Refusal to accept imports from the aggressor, culminating in the cessation of all financial and economic relationships.

5. The immediate and complete internationalisation of civil aviation, which, having been brought in its civil uses under international ownership, could then potentially be used, if finally and absolutely necessary, for world police purposes.

6. The abolition and destruction within five years by every nation of all arms denied to Germany under the Treaty of Versailles (including all military and naval aviation) as the first stage of disarmament. Germany's free and equal international status would then be recognised in fact as well as in principle, so that she might voluntarily enter into a Disarmament Convention. At the same time the security of all nations would be ensured by supervision, by the abolition of naval and military aviation and by the internationalisation of civil aviation.

7. An immediate engagement that, within a final period and by stages, all national armaments should be simultaneously and entirely abolished.

8. An immediate engagement by all the nations to accept limitation of total expenditure on armaments.

9. No further unlicensed manufacture or sale of armaments of any kind; and abolition, within two years, of the manufacture of armaments for private profit.

10. The creation of a permanent Disarmament Commission for the automatic and regular supervision of all armaments in every nation equally, with an engagement by all nations to embody in their national law a guarantee of immunity for any person giving information in good faith to the Commission.

11. These agreements should be embodied in a Disarmament Convention which shall cancel the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles.

12. An engagement by every nation to embody its international obligations in its national law. Individual citizens and Labour organisations will then be legally entitled to resist any breach of international law.

ALLEN OF HURTWOOD
J. R. BELLERBY
ROBERT BERNAYS
JONATHAN GRIFFIN
FRANK HARDIE
C. E. M. JOAD
GEOFFREY LE M. MANDER
GARETH MAUFE
PHILIP NOEL BAKER
CHARLES TREVELYAN
JOHN WILMOT
LEONARD WOOLF

## HUNGARY AND FRONTIER REVISION

SIR,—Please allow me to reply to some of Mr. Lawlor's strictures regarding Hungary's attitude towards frontier revision.

It is not true that, in his recent lectures, Count Bethlen "went much farther than the original Hungarian claim." He claimed the return of the territories inhabited by Magyars which at present form a fringe lying outside Trianon Hungary. The justice of this claim is so self-evident that, since Mr. Lawlor tells us he writes without prejudice, even he presumably must admit it. What Count Bethlen claimed in addition to this was simply the application of the very principle upon which the Peace Settlement was ostensibly based—the principle of national self-determination. He showed that neither the Slovaks, nor the Ruthenes, nor the Croats, nor the mixed population of Transylvania were satisfied with their present lot, and that they themselves demanded the right to decide to which State they should belong. *Whatever the decision may be, Hungary will abide by it.*

Mr. Lawlor complains that the revisionist campaign constitutes

" unwarrantable interference by one State in the domestic affairs of neighbouring States." He forgets the promise, made to Hungary in the original Letter of Envoy, that the frontiers would be reconsidered. It was in reliance upon this promise that Hungary ratified the dictated Peace Treaty. Moreover, if Article 19 of the Covenant of the League means anything at all (and the Succession States have signed this Covenant), it implies that peaceful frontier revision is a legitimate, even a desirable, objective for all States Members of the League. R. G. WALMSLEY

Brontë, Elmsley Road,
Mossley Hill, Liverpool, 18.

## THE PACIFIST'S DILEMMA

SIR,—Mr. Joad's analogy between national and international police seems to call for most careful scrutiny; for, whereas national police can deal with delinquents in ones and twos, international police may not be able to deal with scores of millions of men possessed by national passions. The significant fact is that the world contains only half a dozen large Powers, and were the League to offend more than one of these by enforced decisions, it would divide the world and itself collapse.

It may be psychologically sound to establish an international police force, one among several reasons being that to the States which voluntarily accept such a measure it appears as their final act of surrender to international justice. To use the police force aggressively would nevertheless, one feels, be the beginning of the end of the League.

The international action which seems to be most urgently needed now is to establish, as the basis of international law, a *Charter of the Rights of Nations*, including (*a*) the right of all peoples to become self-determining; (*b*) the right of the local inhabitants to determine by plebiscite the position of disputed boundaries; (*c*) a Minorities Charter; (*d*) freedom of the seas and of access to international trade routes; (*e*) justice in the provision of openings for emigration, through the appointment of a Conciliation Commission to secure adjustments in quotas.

If, acting upon this Charter, it were possible to readjust the German eastern boundary by plebiscite, whilst guaranteeing to Poland and Czechoslovakia freedom of access to the sea by League-controlled railways and waterways through the Corridor; and if it were possible to show a more generous front to Japan as regards emigration, the way might be cleared for :—

Total world disarmament, the transfer to the League of commercial air services, and the inspection of all potential war plant.

If these proposals failed at Geneva, a referendum should be taken on complete unilateral disarmament in the British Empire. Judging from recent ballot results, there would probably be a majority in favour in the British Isles. If no such majority were secured in Australia it would be desirable to negotiate directly with Japan in the hope that, through a sympathetic treatment of her grievances, disarmament might be secured in that country, and the way be thus made plain for Australia.

Unilateral disarmament would certainly mean the avoidance of war at a cost, if any, spiritual and material, less than war, provided that a substantial majority of the British people were in favour.

Association for the Peace Ballot J. R. BELLERBY
of Great Britain.

## THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

SIR,—The difference between " *Vigilantes* " and myself is really quite simple. " *Vigilantes* " have asserted and reasserted that " Members of the League have undertaken to submit to international judgment the question of whether a State is acting in self-defence or guilty of aggression." Contrary to the view of " *Vigilantes*," I have pointed out, and I maintain, that to " submit to " international judgment—in the sense of accepting that judgment and acting upon it—is no part of the obligations which the Covenant imposes upon Members of the League.

It is true, of course, that Members of the League are obliged to submit to some form of international procedure any dispute between them which is likely to lead to a rupture. But, at the request of either disputant, the dispute must be referred to the Council or the Assembly under Article 15 instead of to arbitration or to the Court under Article 13; and neither disputant is pledged to accept whatever settlement is proposed under Article 15 nor whatever statement of the facts is published under that Article. Thus a State is entitled under the Covenant to decide for itself whether it has committed aggression or resort to war. If, however, the other States decide that aggression has taken place within the meaning of Article 10, or resort to war within the meaning of Article 16, it is their duty to enforce their decision.

So much for the original issue between " *Vigilantes* " and myself. There are few, if any, other differences between us. In particular, I most cordially agree that the citizens of every State Member of the League ought to put loyalty to the League on the issue of peace before any national loyalty; and that only if this spirit prevails can we make a reality of the League.

15 Grosvenor Crescent, S.W.1. MAXWELL GARNETT

## THE ANTI-HOUSING POLICY

SIR,—I write to supplement the case stated by Mr. J. M. Keynes in his letter published in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of December 9th.

There is a more serious aspect of the matter. Practically every urban authority in the country has built a number of working-class houses under the Housing Acts, which may or may not have been subsidised. The rents upon many of these are very high, and it requires a great effort by the occupiers to continue to pay these rents, often leaving an insufficient balance of the weekly income to provide food and other necessities.

During the last year a fall in the cost of building has made it possible to build houses similar to those of our municipal housing estates to let at substantially lower rents than those prevailing on the existing housing estates. The obvious course to adopt was for municipalities to continue to build new cheap houses and equalise rents. Instead of that the present Government has deliberately discouraged the continuance of municipal housing schemes, and private enterprise is permitted to build the new cheap houses, and even while obtaining a very handsome return on the capital outlay to undercut prices which still have to be charged on the estates where the municipal houses were built a few years ago. There is a serious danger of the municipalities having to reduce the rents on their housing estates to a " market level," by imposing an additional charge on the rates, while in the meantime the speculative builder, who with the Government's encouragement has so nobly come to his country's aid (now that he can do so with a handsome return on his capital in addition to the Government's plaudits), is reaping the benefit. LEX

## BEDFORD SQUARE

SIR,—As one of the architects who have elected to reside in Bedford Square, this being the only important Georgian square that remains unspoilt, I am, of course, in complete accord with your paragraph on the intrusion of trolley omnibuses.

Should it be desirable to bring these to this neighbourhood, there is a preferable turning route to the west of Tottenham Court Road, but the system of bringing such suburban lines to terminals is a mistaken one. They should be run on a series of routes tangential to the central area connecting at numerous points with lighter public vehicles better suited to the congested streets of central London.

It may interest you to know that it was the intention of the Government to pull down the east side of the Square for an extension of the British Museum, to a design quite out of scale with the remaining houses, and that but for the opportune interposition of the Great War this would probably have taken place many years back. H. V. LANCHESTER

19 Bedford Square, W.C.1.

## POLITICS IN CAMBRIDGE

SIR,—The letter of " Cantab " forces me to disclose an incident, so that your readers can judge how far Cambridge undergraduates have " as much liberty of thought and speech as possible."

In the Michaelmas term, 1932, the President of the Cambridge Union fixed the following motion for debate : " That the sexual morality of Christian Civilisation is unscientific and harmful." He invited a prominent doctor of Harley Street to support the motion, who accepted. He also invited Mr. Newsome, Master of Selwyn, and author of the then famous book, *The New Morality*, to oppose the motion. He refused. But evidently Mr. Newsome did not rest content with a mere refusal. The Senior Proctor sent for the President and " advised " him to cancel the debate. During the long talk that followed, the President explained that his own views were definitely and strongly against the so-called " New Morality," but that it would be both courageous and fair to meet one's opponents in open debate. The Senior Proctor replied that the authorities felt that such matters should not be discussed in public, whereupon the President remarked that it was not for the author of *The New Morality* to take this stand. The Senior Proctor then objected to the wording of the motion, in particular to the word "sexual," which he alleged had an unpleasant ring about it. The President offered to change any or all of the words provided the main subject of the debate remained clear. The Senior Proctor then said that the authorities took objection to a man of such outspoken views as Dr. ——. The President then offered to invite some other speaker if he could find one. But gradually the Senior Proctor made it clear that nothing short of cancelling the debate would do. The President then raised the question of freedom of thought and speech, and pointed out that this amounted to a destruction of both. "Not at all," replied the Senior Proctor, "*it is to protect your freedom of speech that we are asking you to drop this debate*"! The "protection" was evidently compulsory, for, as any Chicago business man will tell you, Mr. Editor, "things happen to a guy who refuses protection."

The debate was dropped. Cambridge retained its freedom of thought and speech, because it also retains its good sense to use neither. S. D.

Common Room,
Middle Temple, E.C.4.

SIR,—Very briefly, in reply to "Graduate's" question, I should say that most of the younger generation at Cambridge would hold the "Marxist" beliefs that the present "crisis" or "slump" is not some inexplicable disaster, nor the result of peculiar folly and incompetence on the part of wicked bankers and financiers, but the foreseeable and inevitable outcome of "the system"—that is, of trying to run an industrial system based on power production by the methods of price and profit making. And that though this particular crisis may be overcome by some expedient, or by "natural forces," it will certainly be succeeded by other crises of the same kind and growing intensity. Consequently, we believe that we are in the period of the breakdown of the whole capitalist system, and facing a period of war and revolution. A great many further beliefs might be added, the most important of which is that war is above all due to the need of rival imperialisms to expand into fresh markets (consequently we do not believe in the various "liberal" remedies which propose to establish peace between Imperialist powers). This is the best I can do in the way of a brief statement, and must not be taken as the precise form in which I or anyone else hold such views.

JULIAN BELL

## STEPHEN LEACOCK ON DICKENS

SIR,—There are some things about which we must not joke. It isn't funny to joke about the King or about Eton or about the Navy (at least people usen't to be funny about the Navy), or about Gordon Richards or about Shakespeare. In fact, like all respectable communities, we have our established institutions; there are some things which to the English are beyond a joke. It is from ignorance of this ingrained characteristic of the English nation that Stephen Leacock has made a serious blunder. He has written a biography of Charles Dickens, and he has outraged nine English critics out of ten. He has, in one light-hearted sentence, compared the genius of Shakespeare unfavourably to that of Dickens.

Well, that's going rather far. But not so far as to justify the attitude of most of the critics, whose reviews I have so far seen—an attitude of Wesleyan horror, like that of one who has observed a brick being thrown through the stained-glass window of the Chapel.

It is undignified (as well as, in this case, unjust and foolish) to call a humorist an iconoclast; and it shows a limited sense of humour. But less dull-minded readers, including the many who have enjoyed Leacock's humour, will, perhaps, retain a slight sense of proportion, and will perceive when the author is being serious and when he is not. The remainder, who cannot detect the moment, should, I feel, keep their lack of intuition to themselves, lest they fall into greater error.

Poor Stephen Leacock. He is a famous humorist, but he has written a serious book, so his reviewers have taken every word and every line *au grand serieux*. Yet, just occasionally, he can't help being funny, and so he has shocked the critics. It is his misfortune that he has been funny about Shakespeare; he has tried our English sense of humour beyond endurance and beyond recall. And consequently some of our most intelligent reviewers devote a whole article to furious abuse of one unimportant sentence in an altogether charming book. A. E. GRANT

13 Bruton Street, W.1.

# Miscellany

## P. G. WODEHOUSE

IT is refreshing, in an age when British reticence will go to any extreme to deprecate success, to find Wodehouse gloating in his own. He despises the man who, crowned with laurels and loaded with gold, explains away the presence of both as accidental droppings from the clouds, impinging upon his person fortuitously. He reveals, in the blandness of his gait, the suavity of a demeanour gorged with achievement. Upon his brow—so high now that at the barber's shop he is no longer regarded as a candidate, he says, for hair-cutting, but is lathered, unasked, when he takes his seat in the chair before the looking-glass—upon this brow is written the word "consistency."

As a little boy, living with his family on the fringe of the butler-belt in Shropshire, he roamed the fields during the holidays thinking of his destiny, the art of writing. Whether he was funny at that time, nobody knows. At Dulwich College, however, he began definitely to amuse. Rather on the football field than as a writer. There was an afternoon when he had the ball under his arm, had raced, dodged, fought his way through the opposing team and had nothing to do to score a try but to run on and jam the ball upon the ground behind the goal-line. Did he? Not at all. He took a terrific drop-kick and missed the posts by twenty yards.

His success was not sudden. Posterity will not know him as an infant prodigy or as the author of one special book. In the literary cavalcade he rides on the good horse Unpretentious. When he left school, he refrained, at first, from writing grown-up novels. He knew and understood the humour of school-life and wrote books for schoolboys. Treasuring the comic side of life in a London bank, he wrote, when he was a member of the editorial staff of the *Globe* newspaper, *Psmith in the City*, the pride of bank-clerks for all time. His newspaper work gave him the material for *Psmith, Journalist*. But with this lack of pretension in choice of theme went unexpected treatment and a wealth of phrase, crackling and brilliant. In turn he presented the idea of the public school, the bank and American journalism in brand new terms. By way of America, the sales of his books went into millions. Pictures of monarchical society are, of course, particularly interesting to republicans. Peerage jazzed by Wodehouse is irresistible to Americans. Wodehouse, pleasantly bantering Americans on some of their strong points, such as culture and snobbery, is joy to Britishers. On both sides of the Atlantic he is, therefore, equally popular. And throughout Europe his Anglo-American stories (done into the vernacular) cause roars of delighted, impartial merriment. He has never had the slightest inclination to adopt a realistic genre. His stance, when he first swung his pen at the ball of fiction, was humour. It still is. No hair-splitter, in academic argument he will not weigh the use of "wit" compared with that of "humour." "Let's call it 'humour,'" he will say. "The greater includes the less."

After a course of deep-reading in Wodehouse one sees that the man behind the book is one of those lucky people who, born gregarious, have that charm of manner which makes them naturally attractive to their fellow-men. Men and cities easily give up their secrets to the creator of Jeeves and Bertie Wooster: and he repays them by the allure of freedom from everyday banalities, by inviting them to stay with him in Wodehousia, that agreeably distorted country where what ought to be annoying is a joke.

His industry has been aided by good health and sound digestion. In the old days, at the end of the table d'hôte dinner in Soho an incisive "encore" was heard to come from Wodehouse, and the waiter, taking away the cheese, would replace it with soup. Unlike most humorists, Wodehouse likes to tell stories against himself and depict scenes in which he is scored off. He enjoys registering comic dismay and making a story out of it. "... some ass switched on the light in the conservatory at the Blanks' dance and I was found with a blanc-mange and a bottle of Bollinger quite by myself. It was thought peculiar in the 'nineties." If the incident seems less abnormal to-day, it is because we are accustomed to situations even more comic and embarrassing in the novels of P. G. Wodehouse.

# TUNES IN VERSE

THERE is no subject upon which more confusion of thought exists than on the structure of poetry, and with the theories of the *vers librists* and the prose poets the confusion has become greater. Coventry Patmore was one of the few poets to write on the theory of his art and a follower of his, Mr. Osbert Burdett, has written a useful essay in his *Critical Essays* on *vers libre* in which he makes a helpful classification. He rightly points out that all speech falls necessarily into rhythm and he divides rhythm into three principal types:

(1) Measured rhythm or metre, the traditional form of verse;

(2) discontinuous or non-metrical rhythm, the rhythm of prose;

(3) complementary cadence, a cross between (1) and (2), the rhythm of the authorised version of the Bible.

He then offers a definition of poetry which will serve to distinguish it from prose and from verse. Poetry exists when no less than three factors are present, namely, metre, substance and diction. He quotes a line of verse attacked by a *vers librist*:

" / / / / / "
I thee do love my darling. Be thou mine.

and says the *vers librist* has no difficulty in showing that this line is not poetry. He might have gone on to say that this line is a particularly useful example, because it is an example of the presence of two factors (metre and substance), and only the absence of the third (diction) prevents it from being poetry. The metre is clear, it is an example of iambic pentameter, the commonest metre in English poetry, with five beats, stresses or accents in the line and with ten or more or fewer syllables. For example, the metre is not altered by the loss of one syllable:

/ / ⌣ / / /
I thee do love my love. Be thou mine.

Nor by the addition of a syllable:

/ / / / /
I thee do love my darling, and be thou mine.

Also, nobody will deny that the substance of the line, which is love, is poetic. It is a line about love, not about a pin, and if we refrain from subtleties for the sake of clarity, we may admit that the word "substance" may stand for an essential ingredient in poetry; or, for that matter, in any art-form. Everybody may then admit, I think, that this line possesses metre, the appearance if not the reality of substance, but is poor and trivial in diction. And for that reason it is not poetry. I am quite aware that anyone giving a little thought to this matter will want to raise a host of questions on these two factors of substance and diction, but I am not dealing with them at all here as I want only to consider the factor of metre.

Now, the next important point we come to is the fact that quality or beauty of rhythm does not depend wholly or even principally upon the form of the metre. An illustration from music will make this clear. Every composer can write a piece of music in common time (four beats to the bar, and the slowness or fastness of the beat is not relevant here), but one piece may have a beautiful rhythm and another not. Actually, there is no means either in music or in poetry of writing down precisely the exact rhythm. It has to be felt by the mind through the ear and rendered by the reproducer. This is why the interpretation of poetry as of music is an art in itself; were it not so every fool could be taught to read or play or sing correctly and there would be no difference between one performance and another. Those who have a poor sense of rhythm invariably confuse metre with rhythm and require to have the metre made very plain to them before they can recognise any rhythm at all, and then it is only the metre that they grasp. Any average performance of Shakespeare or Mozart will make this apparent to sensitive ears. An analogy will best make clear the distinction between metre and rhythm. Metre is a framework for rhythm as the skeleton of bone is a framework for the human body. The skeleton determines the general formation of the body, but only very generally; all the beauty of the *form* of the body—like all the beauty of rhythmic form—depends on an infinity of subtle gradations and modellings—of approaches and departures from the skeleton.

The next point to be made clear is that tune is a form of rhythm. There is another element in tune, namely, tone, and this is more apparent in music than in poetry, although it is equally important in poetry where it is not tone as musicians conceive it; that is to say, with a regular number of vibrations classified in scales or modes, but the colour effect of different vowels and consonants and their combinations which cannot be scientifically measured as musical tone can be.

I shall disregard this tonal element in tune and consider only the rhythmic element. Now a great deal of poetry has no clearly recognisable tune but only a rhythm and I think that, generally speaking, this tuneless-rhythm is a more subtle and more highly developed rhythm than the tune-rhythm. In fact it may be said that tuneless-rhythm bears a similar relation to tune-rhythm that rhythm does to metre. All this is merely preliminary to my giving some examples of the work of a living poet who is greatly addicted to tune-rhythm. As a rule it is inferior or popular poets who write tune-rhythm; most, if not all, nursery rhymes are in tune-rhythm, but the singularity of the work of Mr. F. R. Higgins, the Irish poet, now a member of the Irish Academy of Letters, is that his tune-rhythms have great beauty and distinction. The examples I shall quote are taken from his delightful book of new poems *Arable Holdings*, just published by the Cuala Press (Elizabeth Corbet Yeats) which is edited by Mr. W. B. Yeats.

Here is the first stanza of a poem entitled *The Three-Cornered Field*:

By a field of the crab-trees my love and I were walking
And talking most sweetly to each other;
In the three-cornered field, O we walked in early autumn,
And these were the words of my lover.

Now this is written to a simple folk-tune, and I think most readers will be able to recognise this fact without knowing any particular melody. Only the rhythmic pattern is there, and one could write to it tunes of different melody.

If we try to analyse this rhythm we shall find it is an alternation of four and three beats to the line. I would mark these beats thus:

/ / / /
Bŷ â field ôf thê crab-trêes mŷ love ând Î wêre walkîng

/ / /
Ând talkîng môst sweetlŷ tô êach othêr.

But alternation of four-beat and three-beat lines is common. What gives the‸special character to this tune-rhythm are the triplets "ând Î wêre" in the first line and "lŷ tô êach" in the second which have the time value of two short syllables—that is to say "and I were" in the first line has the same time value as "Bŷ â" or "ôf thê." Another feature of the tune is the fact that there is no triplet in the last line, which would scan thus:

/ / /
Ând these wêre thê words ôf mŷ lovêr.

A more subtle tune-rhythm is in the poem entitled "O, You Among Women" which I will quote in its entirety as it is only two stanzas:

When pails empty the last brightness
Of the well, at twilight-time,
And you are there among women—
O, mouth of silence,
Will you come with me, when I sign,
To the far green wood, that fences
A lake inlaid with light?

To be there, O, lost in each other,
While day melts in airy water,
And the drake-headed pike—a shade
In the waves' pale stir!
For love is there, under the breath,
As a coy star is there in the quiet
Of the wood's blue eye.

I do not intend, nor have I the space to analyse this beautiful poem, but I assure readers that it also is written to a tune-rhythm, but most subtly varied. We might also use other musical terms about these two poems. The first is clearly *andante*, and the " O, You Among Women " *lento*. I would like to give one obvious example of the artistic way in which Mr. Higgins's tune-rhythms avoid all banality and triviality. I am, of course, referring here only to his sensitive use of rhythm, not to his other poetic virtues. The example I will give is in the first stanza of a poem entitled " Meath Men." This poem is written to a very definite tune, but the tune only becomes clear in the third line. Observe especially the subtlety with which Mr. Higgins avoids any strong accents in the first line which passes along vaguely like a falling wave:

When the grass gives the udders comeliness,
Before late milking-time in Meath and Carlow,
Come, Macnamara, in whiskey let us bless
The pastured royalties of Tara.

Rhythm—though not necessarily tune-rhythm—based on metre is certainly one of the essential elements of poetry, but I think that it is an element to which some of our present-day writers are not very sensitive. W. J. TURNER

# PLAYS AND PICTURES

## "A Present from Margate"

The Shaftesbury Theatre is well worth a visit, just now, for any sensation-seeker who has never found himself wanting to laugh and be sick simultaneously. *A Present from Margate* is well enough written and acted to raise its fair quota of laughs. Otherwise it is a most deplorable play, inspired by an almost incredible smugness and rounded off with a last act which is really embarrassing. The story concerns the efforts of Rose Torrent, rich, vulgar, and good-natured, to mix with the Best People, and the efforts of Imogen Duchess of Rye, beautiful, sweet and deathly proud, to harness her craving to the service of charity without conceding her a social inch. There is a chink in the Duchess' armour. While at Antibes she has met a Howling Cad who has tempted her frailty, bullying her to come and see how the poor amuse themselves at Margate in August, and persuading her to stay the night. Three letters were written before patrician pride had reasserted itself and these are now held by Mrs. Torrent—the price of social recognition. Poor Duchess, what can she do but consent to her respectable admirer's offer to steal back the letters? And when he is caught apparently in the act of stealing the Torrent pearls, what but leap, in evening dress, from balcony to balcony, in order to save him? And then all is forgiven by everybody except a few disgruntled spirits in the auditorium, and we are allowed to go. Miss Marda Vanne courageously tackles the parvenu, cleverly winning what sympathy she can by a tacit appeal to our sporting instinct, in this case on the side of the huntress. Miss Joyce Bland's intelligence is completely baffled by the Duchess' intense if charming vacuity, and she is not nearly funny enough, but Mr. Reginald Gardiner redresses the balance with an entirely gorgeous caricature of a bored but bright sprig of aristocracy. Mr. Michael Shepley's portrait of an Empire-builder has such a generic excellence that it should be recorded on a sound-film and preserved in the national archives for the benefit of future students of social history. But what a play!

## The Westminster Play

The Latin play at Westminster is the hardiest of schoolboy annuals. It has been running now for nearly four centuries—ever since Queen Elizabeth ordered the representation each Christmas of one Latin and one English comedy or tragedy, in order that the scholars might accustom themselves better *tum actioni tum pronunciationi decenti*. (The pronunciation of the Latin to-day is still the good old English style, which was assuredly never heard in Rome and which has now practically disappeared from our schools and universities.) The play this week was Terence's *Phormio*. Terence—with his plots taken from the " New Comedy " of Athens, of heavy fathers and love-sick sons and crafty slaves, and his refined and rather monotonous dialogue—is a trifle insipid to this generation. Even among the Romans he appealed to a minority of highbrows; the populace preferred the robuster action and coarser humour of Plautus. The *Phormio* is an ingenious story of intrigue and muddle, in which the name-part is one of those professional spongers, with large appetites and no principles, known to the ancient world as " parasites." The performance, as a whole, was competent, but it lacked liveliness as well as finish. R. D. Barlas as Demipho, the old gentleman of Athens, and J. D. F. Anido as Nausistrata, the shrewish matron, were good. R. M. Robbins's Phormio showed histrionic power, but was too much a conspiratorial villain of melodrama, and this effect was heightened by a facial make-up that looked like a portrait of Rasputin. The Epilogue was brighter. Here the characters get into modern dress and give us a topical revue, in which the young actors (still speaking Latin, but not Terence's!) can let themselves go. There were Nazi plotters and Fascists, electricians and policemen, tithe-ridden farmers in conflict with the bailiffs, Mr. Montagu Norman trying to cope with the pound, the dollar and the mark, and a Prime Minister we all know consulting a number of eminent economists and becoming foggier and foggier. This was all a first-class rag.

## "Happy and Glorious"

Wilfrid Walter's two-character play, written and first produced three years ago, is on for a week at the Embassy. " It might be played on a waggon in the market-place, and the entire production could be packed on a taxi or into a small 'plane," as a programme note says. It is by no means the mere diversion to be treated with tolerance that one expects a two-part play to be, but a serious development of a serious theme. The women's suffrage movement and the war symbolise for the woman and the man the death from which each rises in the end like the phœnix from the flames. The characters keep their own personalities throughout, but the play holds the stage for an evening because the author has managed to make them signify more than their own personal deaths and resurrections. Trappings are reduced to a minimum: small screens in front of a curtain provide the scenery. A good deal of mental agility is demanded from the players, and acting as they do with the necessary speed, Miss Miriam Adams and the author manage to keep it going very well. It is a play that deserves attention: it is experimental, and has defects as pure and continuous entertainment, but it is thoroughly intelligent, and many good lessons might be learned from it.

## "Emil and the Detectives"

Anyone who has not already seen this film should immediately do so. It is that phenomenon, a work of art which will send highbrows and lowbrows, together with their parents and children, into a communal ecstacy. The villain is that superb actor Rasp, and round him swarm the smallest and most beautiful detectives that have ever been seen. The film costs very little to produce; it is sexless, and a fairy story; an unlikely summer game in Berlin before the terror. But in it is the shrill, earnest, unlikely truth of childhood. It is worth seeing if only to hear one of the detectives announce himself—" Ich bin der fliegende Hirsch ! "

# THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, December 22nd—
" Alice in Wonderland," Duke of York's Theatre (matinees).
" Beau Brummell," Saville Theatre.

SATURDAY, December 23rd—
" Peter Pan," Palladium (matinees).
" Toad of Toad Hall," Royalty Theatre (matinees).
" When Knights Were Bold," Fortune Theatre.
" Charley's Aunt," Gaiety Theatre.
" Lilac Time," Alhambra.

TUESDAY, December 26th—
Children's Theatre Pantomime, Embassy Theatre (matinees).
" Treasure Island," Comedy Theatre (matinees).
" Without Witness," Embassy Theatre.
" Hansel and Gretel," Cambridge Theatre.
" Queen of Hearts," Lyceum.
" Buckie's Bears," Playhouse.

WEDNESDAY, December 27th—
" Uncle Tom's Cabin," Gate Theatre.

THURSDAY, December 28th—
Jean Sterling MacKinlay's Christmas Matinee Season. Programme includes " The Reluctant Dragon " by Kenneth Grahame, and " King John's Christmas " by A. A. Milne, Rudolf Steiner Hall.

# Current Literature

## A CHRISTMAS TREE

TWELVE days after Christmas all the holly, spruce fir, mistletoe and ivy decorations that we are busily putting up to-day will be ruthlessly pulled down and thrust into the fire, filling the house for half an hour with the pleasant smell of resin and the poisonous smell of holly. And with the evergreens will be bundled all the chains of pink, blue and yellow paper that have either been bought at shops or painfully forged with gloy and scissors in the nursery. Then the tree itself, if we have had one, has to be stripped of all its tinsel and blown-glass gewgaws which are put away in boxes by careful mothers for next year. But usually some precious glass bird, or balloon, is broken and the glittering danger to young fingers goes into the fire along with the holly. With a swirling of branches against the door-jambs, the tree itself is dragged through the hall and out into the woodshed where it is chopped up by the garden boy; and it too gets burned and fills the house with the scent of the forest. But sometimes one or two of the decorations get overlooked and when an electric bulb at the end of a passage has to be replaced in February one finds oneself confronted by a dog's-eared piece of mistletoe, or else withered holly-berries fall suddenly in a cascade from a picture frame. These unseasonable reminders are supposed to be unlucky, and for some reason they make one feel slightly ashamed, as though the whole business of Christmas decorations were ridiculous and disgraceful. I could understand that feeling if they represented an emotional orgy, but do not see why one should feel ashamed of conforming to a mere ritual.

* * *

But on one occasion a relic of Christmas inspired me with very different feelings: with astonished curiosity and a nostalgic longing to be a child. It was, I should think, late in May on one of those still, hot days when the first unfolding beech-leaves appear, covered with silky white hairs, when squirrels scamper up and down the trees, wood pigeons coo loudly and one looks carefully for basking adders underfoot. I do not always follow the paths through the wood and, on this occasion, my aimless wandering brought me to a hollow where I had not been before, a sun-warmed opening among the undergrowth where the young shoots of bracken were already three or four inches high, rearing their long necks out of the ground like so many sea-serpents from the waters of Loch Ness. It was very sheltered there and hot, a missel-thrush was singing not far off and, as I paused, I saw that there were signs that people had been there before me. Last year's bracken had been gathered up and piled in rust-coloured beds where human beings had lain, but I could see that no one used the place for several months, because the young shoots of bracken were growing next to the circle of stones which had been the fire-place and a young weed was growing among the bits of charcoal.

* * *

"Gipsies must have sheltered here," I said to myself with surprise, for gipsies and tramps usually keep close to the main road and there were none of the old trouser-legs, smashed umbrellas, and boot uppers lying about which are the infallible marks of such wanderers. There was no sign on the ground to show who had been there, nothing until my lifted eyes caught sight of a lump of some sort clinging to a wretched little Scots fir about five feet high which stood in the middle of the clearing. For the first moment I took it for a dried-up weasel hung up there by the keeper and was surprised, because gamekeepers do not light fires in the wood. But no, it was not a weasel or hedgehog after all, it was just brown paper and string and, looking closely at the tree, I saw other pieces of string knotted round the branches, and on the extreme tip of one bough the thing which I had taken to be a fircone was a rusty tin butterfly between whose wings there still clung a stump of pink candle. It was not till I had seen the candle that it suddenly dawned upon me that this little wretched living fir had been somebody's Christmas tree.

* * *

"Who would do a silly thing like that?" I asked myself, for at the moment when I made my discovery I felt contemptuous and I actually pushed on out of the clearing for fifty yards or so. But then I stopped, for my feeling of contempt had subsided and curiosity was growing upon me. I wanted to know what sort of people had done it. Not gipsies, nor tramps, of course; not village children, for they would not have walked through the woods at night. Either it was the work of a party of hardy young people who had felt it pleasant to come out of their villa to have their Christmas party in the woods or of a homeless family of unemployed Londoners who had done this for their children. No, that was too far-fetched an idea and I might just as well picture to myself a sylvan version of the Nativity straight away. . . . A donkey munching hay out of a little nosebag, an out-of-work carpenter roasting a stolen fowl, Mary rocking a new-born child and the older children decking out a tree. No, indeed, the little Christmas tree had served for house-dwellers who had come out to decorate it on Christmas morning. And when dusk fell, after tea, they had come back again and one of them had run ahead to light up all the candles while the others followed holding rosy, gaitered, well-fed little girls by the hand to find the one strange Christmas tree, all lit up and covered with tinsel, a miracle among the dark crowd of its fellows in the forest.

* * *

It had been a cold Christmas, I remembered. The sky would have been crackling with stars, the twigs sparkling with rime. The wonder of the children at this miracle must soon have died away and the first feeling of rapture have been replaced by a carefully concealed disappointment as they realised that it was a trick of the grown-ups, something done to please them and not a *natural* Christmas tree that had been found like that, covered with burning candles, in the wood. But the beauty of the scene would remain, and while the children danced round and pulled crackers, and were given presents, the men of the party must have lit the fire and brewed some punch for themselves and made some hot chocolate for the children. Perhaps they sang, or had brought a gramophone or a wireless set, or else gathered round and listened to a mysterious story. The eyes of the pretty girls would have sparkled like diamonds in the light of the fire. The tall limbs of the beech have gleamed greenish in the light against the pansy darkness of the sky with its shining planets. All too soon it would be the children's bedtime and everyone would be growing stiff with the cold.

* * *

If I had come upon it at that moment, while they were sitting on their bracken beds, how excited and overcome with surprise I should have been! The reflections of the fire flickering on the branches and the voices of the party would first have attracted my attention, and as I scouted nearer I should suddenly have seen this wretched little fir lighted with twenty-five candles, the flames of which burnt steadily upwards in the windless night. The party would have greeted me and have given me a cup of hot punch and their glowing eyes and cheeks would have seemed intensely desirable. But, of course, I ought to have come upon that party when I was a child myself. But one is always too late; nothing comes at the right moment! And trampling down the young necks of the bracken, I stirred up the dead leaves that had drifted round the tree. A few fragments of glass tinsel rewarded me. Pah! I kicked the miserable tree—I hate the fir trees because they are slowly spoiling the beechwoods and because the big horse-ants follow in their wake. And feeling strangely discouraged, I walked away. It was an odd thing to have found and when I had gone a little way, I said to myself that I was wrong to assume that I should have liked the party of people who had done it. Perhaps I should have disliked the sound of their voices, and their tree would have spoiled the wintry night.

DAVID GARNETT

# COLERIDGE

**Coleridge : Select Poetry and Prose.** Edited by STEPHEN POTTER. *Nonesuch Press.* 8s. 6d.

It was several years ago now that Professor J. L. Lowes, following a slender clue through the labyrinth of Coleridge's erudition, was able to trace back to their remote origins two of the most fascinating and perplexing poems in the English language. His researches cast a great deal of light, not only on Coleridge's own method but also on what may perhaps be described as the subconscious, or preconscious, aspect of every form of literary activity. Professor Lowes' book showed us how an idea, or a succession of images, sinking into the unconscious depths of a poet's brain, will suddenly re-emerge, like coral drawn up in the fisherman's net, some few hints from a little-read volume of travels or history having shaped themselves into the symbolism of *Kubla Khan* or *The Lay of the Ancient Mariner*—a process which, although the poet's training has had much to do with the accomplishment of the ultimate miracle, is to a large extent quite independent of his volition. That this phenomenon can never be repeated at will, and that the most ingenious writer cannot anticipate such a treasure-trove, Coleridge's tragic example makes sufficiently clear.

Thus, the *Ancient Mariner*, written in 1797, was succeeded a year later by *Kubla Khan* and that beautiful, but far less exquisite, poem, *Frost at Midnight*. Coleridge had then thirty-six years to live—years of unhappiness, of disillusion, of endless plans endlessly postponed, till the "hooded eagle," with broken, dishevelled flight-feathers, sat drooping upon its Highgate perch, content to spread its wings, if at all, in the majestic monologue of which an imperfect recollection has come down to us as the *Table Talk*, preserved by Crabb Robinson, Frere, H. N. Coleridge and others. From his letters, too, we get an impression of baffled genius. And why baffled ? Was it the drug-habit that had entailed this gradual petrification of the creative faculty ? Coleridge's faculties did not decay ; but, year by year, their exercise became more and more difficult. As the haunting sense of failure became more acute, so did the utter impossibility of realising any plan, of fulfilling even the most cherished ambition, weigh more and more heavily on his groaning spirit. Was laudanum responsible for his collapse ? Or (as I cannot help thinking) was it the sense of failure, of personal unworthiness, of deep-rooted moral insufficiency, which had harassed Coleridge ever since he was an undergraduate, that drove him again and again to that miserable refuge ?

> Laudanum (he wrote in 1798, the year of *Kubla Khan*, to his brother, George Coleridge) gave me repose, not sleep ; but you, I believe, know how divine that repose is, what a spot of enchantment, a green spot of fountains and flowers and trees in the very heart of a waste of sands !

Opium, in short, procured for Coleridge, as at another time it was to procure for Charles Baudelaire, the enjoyment of one of those *paradis artificiels*, "enfolding sunny spots of greenery," to which the Old Man of the Mountain used, during their initiation, to transport his impressionable followers. Disintoxicated, he must justify himself by action ; but, under the spell of laudanum, no justification seemed necessary, and it was enough that he existed and felt and imagined :

> If a man (he recorded in his note-books between 1814 and 1818) could pass through Paradise in a dream, and have a flower presented to him as a pledge that his soul had really been there, and if he found that flower in his hand when he awoke—Aye ! and what then ?

But flowers, gathered in the fields of bland opium-reverie, died and vanished as he crossed the threshold of ordinary life. He was left alone, exposed to the onslaught of terrestrial ills, not the least irksome being a perpetually nagging conscience.

It is tempting to suppose that, with a more amenable conscience and a less powerful sense of his duty towards God and man, Coleridge might have done his duty, as he envisaged it, with a far greater measure of success. But no ; it was the sense of obligation that embittered the sense of failure, and the sense of failure that, in spite of every prohibition and precaution, human and divine, he was obliged to soothe by constant recourse to opium. Yet the craving—and this, I think, is an extremely important point, whether we are considering Coleridge, Baudelaire or De Quincey—was itself merely the symptom of some more fundamental disturbance. Like Baudelaire and De Quincey, Coleridge would appear to have suffered from that "disease of the will," known to mystics as *acedia*, a condition of intellectual and moral paralysis, following a period of intense mental activity, which the sufferer through no effort of his own can ever wholly shake off. "L'inspiration," he might conclude with the French poet, "est décidément la sœur du travail journalier" ; yet still the deadly load of hopes deferred, plans unaccomplished and promises unrealised, kept piling up against him. There was his epic poem on the Destruction of Jerusalem, to which he was to have devoted twenty fruitful and laborious years :

> I should not think (he had written in 1797) of devoting less than 20 years to an Epic Poem. Ten to collect materials and warm my mind with universal science. I would be a tolerable Mathematician, I would thoroughly know Mechanics, Hydrostatics, Optics, and Astronomy, Botany, Metallurgy, Fossilism, Chemistry, Geology, Anatomy, Medicine—then the *mind of man*—then the *minds* of *men*—in all Travels, Voyages and Histories. So I would spend ten years—the next five to the composition of the poem—and the five last to the correction of it.

—his enormous work on the Logos, in five treatises, and his seven Hymns—to Sun, Moon, Earth, Air, Water, Fire and God—"with a large preface or prose commentary each." "So I would write," he observed, "haply not unhearing of that divine and rightly-whispering Voice, which speaks to mighty minds of predestinated Garlands, starry and unwithering." But of all this huge travail of ambitious projects how little—almost nothing—had come to birth !

No, the opium-habit cannot be held responsible for the vast discrepancy between Coleridge's designs and his accomplishment, between the brilliance of his gifts and the dullness and shapelessness of much of his collected work. We can only account for this discrepancy by assuming that through the entire fabric of Coleridge's spirit ran some mysterious pyschological flaw, hardly to be explained in terms of our present knowledge :

> A sense of weakness (he told Southey) a haunting sense that I was an herbaceous plant, as large as a large tree, with a trunk of the same girth, and branches as large and shadowing, but with pith within the trunk, not heart of wood—that I had power, not strength, an involuntary imposter, that I had no real Genius, no depth. This on my honour is as fair a statement of my habitual haunting, as I could give before the tribunal of Heaven. How it arose in me, I have but lately discovered ; still it works within me, but only as a disease, the cause and meaning of which I know. The whole History of this feeling would form a curious page in a *nosologia spiritualis*. . . .

Coleridge himself refuses the key. It is true his stay at Cambridge had been disastrous ; but the disaster seems out of all proportion to its effect on Coleridge's mind. Many undergraduates—and most writers—have got into debt ; but never has financial embarrassment produced a more furious access of mortification :

> What a gloomy *Huddle* of eccentric actions, and dim-discovered motives ! To real happiness I bade adieu from the moment I received my first "Tutor's Bill" ; since that time, since that period my mind has been irradiated by Bursts only of sunshine, at all other times gloomy with clouds, or turbulent with tempests. . . . I became a proverb to the University for Idleness. . . . How many and many hours have I stolen from the bitterness of Truth in these souls-enervating Reveries—in building magnificent edifices of Happiness on some fleeting shadow of reality ! My affairs became more and more involved. I fled to Debauchery ; fled pure silent and solitary Anguish to all the uproar of senseless mirth.

Many writers have contracted an unhappy marriage ; but few have taken it so hard. Many have sought consolation in drugs or drink ; but seldom has a writer struggled against the temptation more lengthily, noisily and ineffectively, or allowed the struggle and its failure to react more disastrously upon his work. Reading the letters, and extracts from letters, printed by Mr. Stephen Potter in his admirably chosen *Coleridge's Select Poetry and Prose*, we build up an impression of Coleridge, both as a great poet and great critic and as an irresolute, muddle-headed human being. Here is the best of Coleridge's verse ; here are specimens of his political journalism, of his metaphysical and theological writings, of his literary criticism (including, of course, entire chapters from *Biographia Literaria*) and an extremely judicious choice of his correspondence. Now, as in his Shakespearian essays and in his note-book jottings, we are astonished by some luminous and incisive phrase ; and now, as in the more intolerable parts of *Biographia Literaria*, we seem to be floundering up to the neck in the Serbonian bog. Here is the lyric poet, the impassioned student, the enthusiastic youth with the "god-like forehead." Here, too, is that sadly "damaged archangel," who voiced his sufferings in the epistolary style of a Mr. Micawber.

PETER QUENNELL

## BY BALLOON TO PARNASSUS

**Modelling and Sculpture in the Making.** By SARGEANT JAGGER, A.R.A. *Studio.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

**A Short History of English Sculpture.** By ERIC UNDERWOOD. *Faber and Faber.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

**Modern Sculpture. Its Methods and Ideals.** By HERBERT MARYON. *Pitman.* 30*s.*

A technical manual, a short history, and a work on aesthetics might be expected to provide the student of sculpture with a vehicle to convey him to any heights. The technical manual is comparable to the basket or gondola equipped with instruments of investigation and record, the history (a philology of the language of sculpture) to the net, cables, tubes and valves which enable him to link up his technical skill with his artistic aspirations, and the last to the balloon itself; a delicate compound of sensibilities and associated emotions only to be confined, made perceptible and tangible by a hermetic envelope of intellectual ideas. This should lift him into that pure empyrean inhabited only by the Muses and their offspring. Are the samples before us of these three components capable of doing so?

Mr. Jagger is a celebrated and prolific sculptor who can describe technical processes with authority. In this book he deals only with modelling. But the instructions he gives are sensible and lucid and there are excellent illustrations. It is a pity that he does not include a chapter on carving. At the end of the book there is an "analysis" of twelve famous works. This is less interesting. And why does he say of a negro carving (which he admires) that "its simplicity is of the same order as that of any artistic infant of the present day when attempting to represent human features"? Children's drawings surely look very different?

Mr. Underwood's History of English Sculpture is necessarily very compressed, but it is well done. His bias, if any, is to the left. But as a whole his critical comments are cautious—"as to his purely sculptural capabilities opinions differ widely." There is some pertinent quotation of the views of contemporary sculptors. It does not pretend to be a book for scholars, but it should be of value to everyone else. The forty-eight photographs are good and well chosen.

And now we come to the gasbag. Perhaps there is no field of human activity more wrapped in obscurity than the criticism of sculpture. Endless historical and biographical work has been done, often by persons of great taste, but no one has yet hit upon a satisfactory aesthetic. All this Mr. Maryon acknowledges in his large book on *Modern Sculpture,* and hopes to fill the gap. One cannot think that he has succeeded.

He makes a list of the eight "chief qualities attainable in sculpture" which singly or together he regards as "the sculptor's aims." But some of the terms seem to include or overlap others. They are, Nature Study, Carving for Its Own Sake, Unity, Character and Feeling, Power, Life and Movement, Decorative Effect, Style or the Personal Equation. It seems not unlike a list of subjects for discussion at a meeting of Bishops. The main body of the book consists in the somewhat perfunctory consideration of innumerable examples. But in his chapters on Unity, for instance, where he discusses design based on the Circle, the Ellipse, the Figure-of-Eight, etc., his examples only serve to show that a work may fit as snugly as you please into these forms and remain a very frightful thing. The criticism under the other heads is necessarily even more nebulous. "From what I have written elsewhere in this book my readers may know what effects do appeal to me! I can explain the reasons for my appreciation, but I cannot compel theirs." But his explanations are often obscure. He seems to be suspicious of unrealistic sculpture though he is at pains to show that he "understands" it. Gaudier-Brzeska is mentioned only to be shrilly abused, Maillol and Brancusi get a passing word, Despiau does not appear at all. But it is hard to have to invite Mr. Maryon to widen his sympathies, for in every other direction they seem already boundless. He can enjoy almost anything, and among his 350 odd illustrations there are certainly some camels to swallow.

The quality of the photographs is often extremely poor. In many the background has been blotted out so that the work is left with a more or less arbitrary silhouette drawn by the photographer, and everywhere his handiwork can be seen in lining and touching up. It would be an advantage if the approximate size as well as material of the works could be given. Often it is difficult to tell if the piece is as small as a cruet or as large as the Albert Memorial. However perfect the internal proportions, this must make some difference.

Mr. Maryon's aesthetic is too liberal. One is reminded of Mr. Curdles' appreciation of the Infant Phenomenon. "'The unities, sir,' he said, 'are a completeness—a kind of a universal dovetailedness with regard to place and time—a sort of a general oneness, if I may be allowed to use so strong an expression. . . . I find passing through the performances of this child a unity of feeling, a breadth, a light and shade, a warmth of colouring, a tone, a harmony, a glow, an artistical development of original conceptions. . . I don't know whether I make myself understood?' 'Perfectly,' replied Nicholas."

We fear this balloon must be regarded with suspicion. The envelope seems leaky and its contents heterogeneous; here dense and turgid, there almost evacuated. The student who trusts himself to it must risk being carried up and up beyond his destination to burst and be irrecoverably dissipated in the stratosphere, or let fall to earth with a humiliating and possibly destructive bump.

## AMERICAN CIVILISATION

**The American Experiment: A Study of Bourgeois Civilisation.** By M. J. BONN. *Allen and Unwin.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Dr. Bonn in this profoundly interesting book writes less as an economist than as a social psychologist. He is not primarily concerned with the immediate prospects of the dollar, but with the character of the people confronted with the apparent failure of the competitive capitalism in which they had trusted and which had seemed to guarantee a prosperity unequalled in human history. In a brilliant analysis of the driving forces in American history, he shows us the various types of settler stock, operating in the stimulating atmosphere of boundless opportunity to develop a material and moral civilisation on a basis of individual liberty and social equality, the main ingredients and supports of their political democracy. Though the southern aristocracy and peasantry played their part in the great westward movement, Dr. Bonn finds the chief stimulus to the pioneer experiment in the puritan temperament of New England. The spiritual freedom which drove these settlers to flee from European intolerance, accompanied by the sense that all men were equal in the eyes of their "Maker," and supported by the "manifest destiny" of "a chosen people," served to explain the immense optimism needed for the American experiment. The swelling tide of later immigration, first German and Irish, then Scandinavian, Italian, Slav, pouring in to take part in the taming of the West, or to replace the departed farmers in the East, and later to fill up the great industrial centres with the ill-mixed ingredients of "the great melting pot"—these important factors in the later phases of the great experiment are set out in vivid portrayal. No other work presents in the compass of three hundred pages a survey so illuminating by its informed selection of material and its comprehensive grasp of the significant drives towards the present situation.

Perhaps the great turning point, from the standpoint of real democracy, was the closing up of free land that came with the end of the nineteenth century, and the grants of a plutocracy based on the seizure of "franchises" in the new mushroom cities. Yet even then there was little of the class consciousness that exists everywhere in Europe. The sense of opportunities to rise has hardly yet been stifled in the ordinary citizen: it still seems to leave a sturdy individualism as the dominant temper of "the good American," though the reality of such opportunity has almost disappeared for most of the inhabitants.

Those qualities of optimism and adventure which give a certain magnificence to the experiment may, however, when thwarted, become sources of peril. For the American people as Dr. Bonn presents them have little regard for tradition or for authority, as recent examples of fierce lawlessness indicate. Though accustomed to bear with equanimity brief periods of misfortune, they will not sit down under a prolonged depression, without courageous, even rash, attempts to force a remedy. If mass production with a rising standardised consumption, which has hitherto satisfied the great majority of citizen-workers fails, Dr. Bonn sees no necessary limit to the drastic changes America might take. For American capitalism of the competitive order has definitely failed unless its masters can see the desirability of a drastic policy of high wages and restricted profits, such as is needed to equate consumption with growing productivity. Failing such a "conversion" of the capitalist spirit, socialism or even communism, probably under some face-saving title, would be preferable to impotent despair. "After all, the life of the early New England township was based on a communal conception. And the majority of the many religious denominations that have risen in the United States have striven after that spirit of brotherhood which was one of the main roots of early Christianity and which is claimed by Bolshevism. There is a curious antithesis in the American mind between the almost anarchistic search for God, flowing from the egocentrical and egotistical desire of the individual to be saved in his own fashion, and the easy combination of these yearning individual souls held together in religious groups by more or less mystical bonds of a common belief. There are some analogies between American revivalism, Bolshevik fanaticism and the emotional Socialism of the German Nazis." (p. 284).

Though Dr. Bonn is not concerned with prophecy, he evidently believes that social planning on a large national scale is an early probability, as an escape from the *impasse* which capitalism has reached. The book is a realistic study of the first importance and is admirably translated. J. A. HOBSON

## NEW LECTURES BY FREUD

**New Introductory Lectures to Psycho-Analysis.** By S. FREUD. Translated by W. J. H. SPROTT. *Hogarth Press.* 10s. 6*d*.

Many people will agree that the *Introductory Lectures*, which were delivered by Freud between 1915 and 1917, gave a masterly account of his researches in a form eminently suited to the general reader. The style of writing held the reader's attention throughout and the subject matter fascinated him. The publication, in English translation, of an addition to this series of seven more lectures recently delivered, is therefore an event of importance. It is the object of the lecturer to explain the developments in psycho-analysis since the earlier publication took place. Undoubtedly he has succeeded in this task with regard to the points on which there is agreement between psychological investigators. Certain aspects of the subject, however, such as the psychological investigation of infants, are not described fully. Freud explains that he himself has not been able to follow all the recent developments. He says "I shall only open the door and show you what lies behind it, but I shall not take you inside. If your interest in psycho-analysis is maintained, you will be able to learn a great deal that is both new and valuable on these subjects." The style of these lectures maintains the high standard of the first series and the exposition of even the most difficult parts of the subject is very clear (for example, the beginning of the lecture on anxiety and instinctual life and the lecture on the psychology of women). In one or two places the translator has made use of peculiar phrases, but we must remember that Freud is a difficult author to translate even under the best circumstances. The English is of a high quality.

Some of the subjects dealt with in this book will cause surprise to the general reader. Under the heading of *Dreams and the Occult* Freud discusses what contribution psycho-analysis may have to make in the explanation of occult phenomena. He is of the opinion that, if thought-transference is a reality, the conveyance of ideas takes place from the unconscious mind of one person to the unconscious mind of another. Some readers may consider that the evidence here, on which Freud bases his conclusion, is hardly sufficient, although it makes good reading. Although he takes occult phenomena seriously, Freud makes no compromise with mysticism or spiritualism. In the last chapter he shows himself to be an out and out rationalist. He does not believe that either religion or philosophy in themselves hold out any real promise of happiness for mankind. "Our best hope for the future," he says, "is that the intellect—the scientific spirit, reason—should in time establish a dictatorship over the human mind. The very nature of reason is a guarantee that it would not fail to concede to human emotions and to all that is determined by them the position to which they are entitled." As for religion, Freud points out that when Kant held conscience to be divine he was correct, for ideas of divinity, as well as the pricks of conscience, are derived from the child's view of its parents.

One of the most impressive things about Freud's work is that he has been able to make concrete the intangible world of thought and feeling which is the true province of psychology. The dream is the most unmistakable manifestation of genuinely psychological phenomena and the study of dreams can perhaps be said to be the most characteristic part of Freud's work. In this book he amplifies the original theory, put forward in *Die Traumdeutung*, that the dream is the fulfilment of a wish. It is more accurate to say that it is an attempted wish fulfilment. The laws of mental functioning, which have developed out of this nucleus, constitute a body of organised knowledge which, in the opinion of many people, deserves the name of a science. Others have held that it is more like a religion (with such people, Freud says, it is of no use to argue). Perhaps psycho-analysis is best described as a prescientific clarification of thought. But the name is of little importance. The essential point is that these great advances in psychopathology have only been made possible by taking up the Socratic attitude of scepticism with regard to our conscious motives. L. S. PENROSE

## DICTATOR AS HERO

**Portrait of a Dictator.** By R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM. *Heinemann.* 8*s*. 6*d*.

For long the most backward and least accessible of South American republics, Paraguay had up to the middle of the nineteenth century endured every kind of despotism from the benevolent and indolent to the cruel. Under Francia, a Voltairean sceptic without the enlightenment, 5 per cent. of the population were in prison for political reasons—and they were, naturally, the educated. The time of Francia was a long one of official robbery under arms. The Lopez who succeeded him, the father of Mr. Cunninghame Graham's villain, was benevolent in comparison, but there was negro or Indian blood in his veins and he was notorious for several acts of atrocious cruelty. Absolutism follows certain inescapable paths and Carlos Lopez had entered upon the penultimate stage where huge military preparations are made, leading inevitably to self-destruction in foreign wars. It remained for his son, Francisco Solano Lopez, to complete the ruinous logic of his father's policy and in him despotism appeared at its most monstrous and most absurd. He was the despot magnified and overdressed in tropical grossness and fantasy. His uniforms would have stocked a comic opera. He ruled only for five years, but during that time Paraguay was turned into a vast arsenal and barracks, and Francisco, returning from the Paris of the Second

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Empire with visions of Napoleon in his head and the voice of an ambitious Irish mistress in his ear, got the war he wanted. The country was laid waste and the population all but exterminated, he himself accounting for a large share of the massacre. For as defeat followed defeat he executed his own people or drove them out of the towns and villages into the forest before the army. What Lopez could not save he preferred himself to kill.

The nickname of Francisco Solano Lopez was "monkey-tiger." He was a sadist and megalomaniac. His private cruelties to his mistresses—they were driven along the roads to be lanced by the soldiers—the flogging he gave his mother, his cowardice on the field all mark him as exceptional in beastliness. But there is a strange resemblance between his actions and those of his European successors. He extorted confession by torture, he ordered wholesale imprisonments and executions, he visited his tortures not only on supposed offenders—called traitors—but on their families, not excluding women and children. His ferocity grew with his fear, and when he was finally shot in an ambush he cried with the perversity which had ruled his life ever since he had come out of the hands of his Jesuit tutor, "I die *with* my country."

This was, alas, almost true.

Remembering our Jonathan Wild and the doctrine of "True Greatness," looking around at the enfeeblement of the will which causes a people to call for "strong" men, it should not surprise us that a public monument has been erected to Lopez in Paraguay. The educated had been wiped out. And the Guarani Indians, who are the majority of the population, had had a long preparation for this final act. Docile, indolent, lacking in initiative and only too easily ruled, they were destined either for the Jesuit heaven—to which they had been converted with suspect ease—or for the Lopez hell; and it is clear that however happy they had been under the rule of the meticulous Fathers they could not develop under the Jesuit system even the beginnings of the kind of self-reliance which might have protected them later. The unhappy future in store for those who do not demand to be taught the art of being free, could not be better demonstrated.

The subject is made for Mr. Cunninghame Graham. He can gallop up and down it wildly, shouting his picturesque if often irrelevant proverbs, his digressions into personal experience, his orders for local colour, introducing a spirited disorder and raising a dozen unanswered questions. He is dashingly indiscriminate, and the horse is his hobby-horse. One notes with malicious pleasure his delight in the fact that Lopez became too fat to ride. And, of course, the gauchos are heard off stage. There are few writers more amateur, more exasperating and more readable. He knows only heroes and villains, and them he rules with the most stylish, the most careless, the most garrulous of literary despotisms.

V. S. PRITCHETT

## THE CANNY GAEL

**Challenge to the Highlander.** By A. A. W. RAMSAY, Ph.D. *Murray.* 7s. 6d.

It is, we suppose, a natural irritation at certain aspects of the new Scottish nationalism that has misled Miss Ramsay into entitling her book in a manner that is inappropriate, and even repellent. This is to be regretted, for it is a serious book and always interesting, though uncommonly exasperating as well. "Challenges" are nearly always a mistake, but if uttered at all they should at least be whole-heartedly pursued. Miss Ramsay does not do this. She wants to have things both ways—to propound certain highly controversial theses about the history and national genius of Scotland, and then to gain the merit of strict impartiality by assuring us that her biographical sketches of six famous Scots that are supposed to prove the theses "were written quite independently of theory." One can well believe it. Miss Ramsay is obviously much more interested in men than in theories. That is what gives her book its value.

For a hundred years and more an enormous amount of nonsense has been written and spoken of the difference between the Highlander and the Lowlander of Scotland. It has usually been represented as a matter of race. Anthropological surveys give no support to the notion. The Scots, like the English, are a mixture of races—much the same mixture—which is pretty evenly diffused from Maidenkirk to John o' Groats. But for various reasons, mainly geographical, a division of culture and language took place that came to be defined by a southward-bulging curve drawn from the Firth of Clyde to the Moray Firth. That was the historic "Highland Line." The seat of government was always south of that line, and the Court and people readily adopted Anglo-Norman culture and (after their fashion) the Anglo-Norman tongue; but the people of the mountains north of the line stuck to their old ways and words. That is the whole difference between Highlander and Lowlander. In the course of time the Lowlander came to regard the Highlander as a barbarian, if not a savage, and, if sober history is to be believed, with reason; but the severity with which he was treated after the Forty-five Rebellion produced a revulsion of feeling. Now that he was no longer a public nuisance it was safe for a Rousseau-fed generation to begin idealising him. The process was later so effectually organised by Sir Walter Scott that it survived the passing vogues of Rousseauism and romanticism, and has recently been carried to extravagant lengths. As Miss Ramsay says, "the Highlander, a dreamer and a poet, a mystic and a romantic, is contrasted with the shrewd, keen, pushing, practical Lowlander." Miss Ramsay thinks the characters should be reversed.

It may be so. There is much to be said for it, but Miss Ramsay's way of saying it is perplexing. She gives us six biographical sketches of eminent Scotsmen who flourished between 1645 and 1745. Three of the men are Highlanders—the Marquis of Argyll, Ewen Cameron of Lochiel, and Simon Lord Lovat; and three Lowlanders—Montrose, Johnstone of Warriston, and Forbes of Culloden. One notes, first, that two of the so-called Lowlanders are heavily tarred with the Highland brush, while the third was a religiose neurotic who cannot in any fairness be taken as typical. In the second place, if we accept Miss Ramsay's reading of Scottish history the most malign figures in the lamentable seventeenth century were the Lowlanders, Montrose and Warriston—a paradoxical conclusion for one who professes so emphatic a Lowland bias. And for one who obviously knows her history so well she is curiously impatient of historical detail, and constantly takes it for granted that her reader is nearly as intimately acquainted with the tenebrous intricacies of Scottish seventeenth-century political intrigue as she is herself. This mars even her best essay, that on Warriston, which dismisses the man's career under Cromwell in a couple of lines, so that even an informed reader finds himself gulping and gasping in the effort to comprehend. She ought to have taken far more elbow room. Also there are several irritating little slips. The Christian name of the most un-Christian first Earl of Breadalbane was not Colin, but John. Culloden was fought on April 16th, not April 13th; and there are statements in the account of Glencoe for which one would like to have the authority.

DONALD CARSWELL

## MORALITY IN DETECTION

**S.S. Murder.** By Q. PATRICK. *Cassell.* 7s. 6d.

**The Clue of the Dead Goldfish.** By VICTOR MACCLURE. *Harrap.* 7s. 6d.

**The Murder at the Flower Show.** By MARK BECKETT. *Eldon Press.* 7s. 6d.

**Drury Lane's Last Case.** By BARNABY ROSS. *Cassell.* 7s. 6d.

**The Judson Murder Case.** By A. B. LEONARD. *Thornton Butterworth.* 7s. 6d.

**The Cold Finger Curse.** By EDWIN DIAL TORGERSON. *Falcon Books.* 7s. 6d.

**Murder Among Friends.** By "SIMON." *Wishart.* 7s. 6d.

**The Case of the Gold Coins.** By ANTHONY WYNNE. *Hutchinson.* 7s. 6d.

**The Real Detective.** By GEORGE DILNOT. *Geoffrey Bles.* 10s. 6d.

Why do so many authors engage their detectives for their morals rather than their intelligence? The unravelling of crimes, in fiction at any rate, should be a task for brains alone, one imagines—the brains of the author and those of the reader. In fact, Inspector Thingummy's ethical views on marriage, alcohol, gambling and the social structure of society would seem to be of no interest unless they have some bearing on the elucidation of murder. If the criminal, for instance, were to play upon the Inspector's notorious fondness for clean-running Rugby footballers in order to mislead the pursuit and protract the chase, that would be a legitimate tactic for the author to employ. But that is exactly what authors do not do; I have never yet enjoyed the spectacle of Thingummy being led up the garden path by an angel-faced boy scout. On the contrary, the perennial trouble with detective writing being to pad out a plot, however good, to a minimum of 250 pages, the Inspector's extraordinary high-mindedness is too often put to this ignoble use. The reader can safely exempt from suspicion any character whose moral status has once passed the Inspector's scrutiny and been found incompatible with serious crime. After that you may disregard all tell-tale finger prints, ownership of revolvers, jewels in trouser-pockets or boots on the body; they may worry the Inspector still, but they need never worry you. They are the reddest of herrings and the fox has gone the other way.

Mr. MacClure's Inspector Burford in *The Clue of the Dead Goldfish* is a typical example of a detective over-padded with moral sentiments; he never solves a case without incidentally having an uplifting influence on every individual who crosses his path. In this instance a body is discovered in the *débris* after a fire with a bullet through the heart. Burford runs his eye over the neighbours and over the footprints and over the goldfish lying squashed by the lily-pond. The reader is meant to follow the devious peripatetics of the footprints—the goldfish being only introduced to provide a pretentious title to the book—but the neighbours supply an infinitely shorter cut to the solution. Any detective writer who allows his public to identify the criminal for certain in the first 100 pages of his book, must have either a dramatic talent or great fertility of imagination to carry their interest along with him to the conclusion; and neither of these does Mr. MacClure possess. Dr. Blair in *The Judson Murder Case* is another of these revealing moralists. There are supposed to be five characters suspected of murdering a millionaire in his library during an after-dinner nap, but through Dr. Blair's personal sympathies for four of them being stressed there is only one left for the reader to fasten on. And here again there is nothing very dramatic or ingenious to keep one's enthusiasm alive once the murderer has been guessed. Major Burton in *The Murder at the Flower Show* is not quite so blatant in his predilections as Burford and Blair, but even he, in spite of his training in the secret service, simply *won't* allow one to suspect more than two characters at the most of shooting the stockbroker outside the billiard-room, while the flower show is in progress. Apart from this defect the plot is well worked out.

The author of *The Tragedies of X, Y and Z* has provided his actor-detective with a last appearance in *Drury Lane's Last Case*. This story is a disappointment after Drury Lane's previous three cases. I very much object to false science being lugged into detective stories to exalt the learned detective and humiliate the ignorant reader. The clue in this case, on which a whole slice of the solution depends, if it were scientifically true would be extremely neat. Whereas, being quite untrue, it is an insult to expect us to swallow it. The nature of the crime and the solution can both be inferred from the title and a previous acquaintance with Drury Lane. If Mr. Barnaby Ross will insist on preserving the symmetries his riddles will solve themselves before we open his books. And if *this* comment is a riddle to anyone he must read *Drury Lane's Last Case* for the answer to it.

Mr. Q. Patrick has improved out of all knowledge. *S.S. Murder* deserves all the praise I can lavish on it. The setting is a liner on a voyage to South America (my favourite !), where on the first night out an important passenger falls dead from strychnine poisoning at the bridge table. The story is written in diary form by a lady journalist on board. The plot is sound, the style lively and dramatic, with plenty of surprises. The only criticism I dare make is that the clue leading to the solution is too slender to bear the emphasis laid on it. No wonder that the author on page 289 dares challenge all comers to find this clue before the detective reveals it! Personally I had found the right solution at an earlier page, but I still refuse to accept the clue, even when presented with it. *The Cold Finger Curse* and *The Case of the Gold Coins* are both second rate. The first is American—the murder of a woman for her jewels during a Bohemian party; and the solution, alas! involves our old friends, the gangsters. *The Case of the Gold Coins* concerns the murder of a peer on a Northumbrian beach, and is a sticky mixture of fantastic events and unbelievable people. *Murder Among Friends* is put forward as an up-to-date case of psychological detection. The solution, however, is old and poor, without any plausibility; and the promised psychology turns out to be connected with Yogis and magical practices, with a dim glimmer of Freud flitting round like a will-o'-the-wisp.

When we reach the detectives of everyday life after so many creatures of fancy, we may well expect to find them somewhat different. But in *The Real Detective* Mr. George Dilnot, the editor of the Famous Trials Series, who should know something of his subject, is at pains to glorify the romantic atmosphere of Scotland Yard. We learn that the Flying Squad develop a sixth sense which enables them to spot a crook at sight. This seems strangely like Inspector Burford, who was so "fey" that he always knew when he was in the presence of evil. It sounds almost too convenient, both in fact and fiction. Was not there a Flying Officer the other day who had an unfortunate experience in the early hours of the morning when he ran into the Squad developing its sixth sense? Mr. Dilnot claims too many virtues for the noble Yard, and his book will be a terrible encouragement to those authors who are already unwilling to believe that five senses and no nonsense are quite sufficient equipment for the detection of crime.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

# About Motoring

## SARAH'S DILEMMA

SARAH is a middle-aged woman of my acquaintance, who has lately entered into an income which may reach four figures, and has enabled her to gratify a long-standing ambition to own a car. She lives in a villa on a busy road with a narrow and rather shallow garden behind the villa and the road. She has built a first-class garage with its longitudinal axis at right angles to the road, and a short "drive" of about 50ft. running dead straight to impinge into the road at right angles. But her new toy is not proving an unmixed joy, because she simply hates driving the car in reverse. Her tribulations are probably common to many novices, and some discussion of them may be worth while. She originally elected to enter her gate and garage bonnet forwards, on the ground that the road carries a fair amount of traffic, and that her gyrations, when she endeavoured to reverse in at the gate and to hit the garage doorway centrally with the car axis registered on the garage axis, provoked a series of disasters. But this method anon filled her with dismay. If she entered with the bonnet leading, she had to come out backwards. Assuming that by a chain of petty miracles she emerged from the garage backwards in safety without fouling her work bench or either of the door-posts; and further assuming that she contrived to keep the car

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MARTELL'S
CORDON BLEU

on the drive as far as the gate without massacring her treasured turf verges (once the begonias beyond the verges suffered numerous casualties); and still further assuming that the car eventually found itself with its flanks equidistant from the two gate posts, and did not slew wildly and hit a gate post with one front wing or the other during its final exit; she was, nevertheless, wrung by cruel agonies lest some form of traffic should block her concluding dash into the roadway, for when the car finally debouched into the road, she herself was still some 8ft. inside the gates, and literally could not see whether anything was coming or not. She sought a temporary solution with the aid of Jane, her maid-of-all-work. Jane was posted on the pavement outside the gate, and instructed to signal " all clear " or " stop." But Jane is temperamental, and her cries tended to confuse, whilst lacking the training and the stolid temperament of police constables, Jane proved incapable of simple hand signals—the uplifted arm to signify danger, the gentle forward patting of a dropped hand to suggest cautious exit, and the enthusiastic wave to justify a real dash out into the world of liberty. If this business was terrifying with Jane stationed outside and the full assistance of daylight, it was simply impossible at night when all the Scylla and Charybdis of doorway, turf verge, begonias, gate post and external traffic was veiled in inky gloom; and trebly impossible on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, when Jane enjoyed the rights of a modern domestic, and took her three evenings off. So at long last, Sarah has tearfully consulted me. And for once the oracle finds himself a little tongue-tied. These right-angle debouchments into busy roads are unquestionably dangerous even for the expert, and especially so when he is single-handed, and has no scout at his command. In fact, I reverence Sarah as an exceptionally brave spirit, for if I could not reverse with a casual, insolent ease, I should loathe her entries and exits. However, an opinion was demanded, and I emphatically instructed Sarah to make a habit of reversing into her garage, so that she can always emerge bonnet-leading, and see with her own blue eyes whether any of the public are endangered when she comes out. Reversing into the garage may be an ordeal, but at any rate it is accomplished by full all-round vision, and the public must be considered, rather than the individual. Then we added a reversing lamp to the car—all cars should have these, as a matter of course; but Sarah's was not so fitted, though it bears many costly toys of dubious utility. (To avoid a possibly unreliable automatic switch we fitted a hand switch with a series tell-tale bulb on the dash.) Next I taught Sarah what her original tutor had deemed otiose, that when she reverses she should turn half left, and peer through the stern window, instead of leaning out through the right-hand window. Then we defied the law, and painted a white mark on the opposite kerb outside her house. If she runs her car with his bows level with this white mark, waits till all is quiet, and then reverses on full left-hand lock, she is bound to " offer " the broad stern of her car at her gate in approximately accurate register with its opening. But once entered at the gate her troubles begin. I still cherish faint hopes that with continued practice she will ultimately be able to straighten the car out neatly after entering the gate, and to hold it straight till its stern registered with the garage entrance. Incidentally, we have installed quite a high-power electric bulb in the gable of the garage, so that the concluding manoeuvre is performed under the equivalent of daylight conditions. But last night under a clear moon and with the gable lamp illuminating the entire garden, she made about ten " offers " at the garage door amidst wild shrieks from Jane and curt military commands from me, before she coaxed the rump of the car between the doorposts; and even then she swung her steering wheel wildly, and scraped much black enamel off a wing before the car was fully inside. So I meekly suggested that we should charter her handy man to construct two concrete ruts down the drive, each silled with old railway sleepers, so that when the car was once inside the gate, it should be remorsely guided against her will into its resting place for the night. Sarah was quite haughty about this proposal; she regarded it as a humiliating confession that she is a very clumsy driver, as indeed she is. In fact, I regret to report that a still more humiliating suggestion (in my opinion) is now under serious consideration. There is a taxi rank at the corner; and before Sarah received her small fortune, she was a liberal patron of the rank. Any of the taxi-drivers would always leap at the suggestion of garaging the car for her. An occasional cigar or short drink or small coin would insure a twenty-hour day-and-night service of this character. Will Sarah surrender? I am afraid she has already surrendered in spirit.

R. E. DAVIDSON

# Playtime

## CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

### PROBLEM 52.—THE GREEK TRANSLATION

The afternoon before a scholarship examination one of the Sixth Form boys of Wigby School entered the Headmaster's study and made a rough translation of a Greek prose paper that was lying on the table. The translation was found in the study which is occupied by Arfback, Bowler, and Cribb; and it may be taken as certain that the culprit is one of these three boys. Haled before the Headmaster, they made the following statements:

*Arfback:* " I never entered your room all day, Sir."
*Cribb:* " Well, it wasn't either Bowler or me."
*Bowler:* " I was feeling very unwell, Sir."
*Cribb:* " I can't do translation from the Greek, Sir."
*Bowler:* " That's quite true, Sir; he can't."
*Arfback:* " It certainly was not Bowler, Sir."
*Bowler:* " And I can vouch for Arfback's statement that he never came near the place."
*Cribb:* " Well, I was in Arfback's company all afternoon."
*Arfback:* " And it's quite true, Sir, that Bowler was far from well."

The Headmaster asked a Mr. Dubb to investigate. The latter, an impertinent young man who was under notice, sent in the following report:

" Dear Headmaster.—Nine statements were made to you by the three suspects. Of these nine statements, three, and three only—one statement by each suspect—are true. I need say no more."—A. Dubb.

On the assumption that Mr. Dubb's report is accurate, who translated the paper?

### PROBLEM 50.—THE RAINBOW ELECTION

The candidates distributed their votes as follows:

| | R | O | Y | G | B | I | V | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Miss Rooge .. | — | 3 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 10 |
| Miss O'Nowall .. | 0 | — | 4 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 9 |
| Miss Yarner .. | 2 | 3 | — | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 8 |
| Miss Grynsom .. | 1 | 0 | 0 | — | 4 | 1 | 1 | 7 |
| Miss Beamer .. | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | — | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Miss Initt .. | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | — | 2 | 5 |
| Miss Van Itty .. | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | — | 4 |

The popularity of problems of this type is once again in evidence. I should think the number of entries will prove almost a record.

### PROBLEM 49.—MISS TAPPIT

A set of Low's cartoons goes to L. Kenworthy, 51 Oldsborough Road, North Wembley, Middlesex. There were thirty-eight correct solutions. *Seven* points are awarded.

### " A LITTLE CIPHER "

The keyword is LOGARITHMS.

About fifty readers sent me solutions. The *Playtime Omnibus* goes to: Miss Mary K. Brookes, Robert Ferguson Senior School, Carlisle.

### TWO CONUNDRUMS

I

A chief in deed—resourceful, bold
And highly mettled;
('Twas Corneille wrote of him of old).
That's clearly settled.

II

This is a weapon all may wield;
To that the sluggard went;
Between, a modest coin's concealed—
And there's your ornament.

Find the two words.

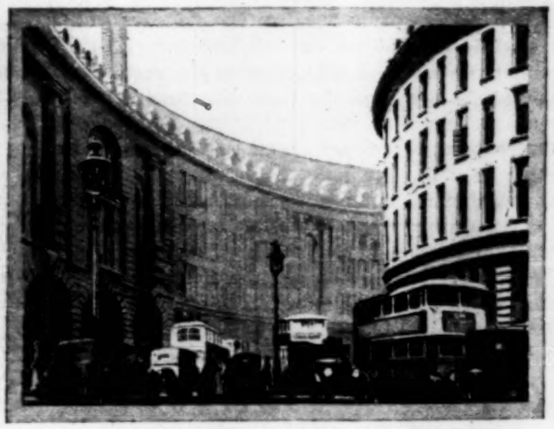
I will again present a copy of the *Playtime Omnibus* for the first correct solution.

### PLAYTIME DINNER

The dinner will be held at the Arundel Hotel, Arundel Street, W.C.2, on Thursday, January 11th, at 7.30 for 8. Morning dress. All readers of this column, and as many friends as they care to bring, will be welcome at the dinner. Parlour games, to follow the dinner, are being arranged by the Committee.

Applications for tickets (5*s.* per person, exclusive of wines), should be addressed to the Hon. Sec., Mr. S. T. Shovelton, at King's College, Strand, W.C.2. Mr. Shovelton will be glad if those wishing to attend will apply as early as possible, and in any case not later than January 4th.

CALIBAN



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T.T.129b

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THIS is the moment when it is discovered that Uncle George or Aunt Sybil or young Anthony has been completely overlooked in the list of Christmas Presents. What restitution can be made ? The case calls for a little hard thinking until it is suddenly remembered—why, of course, Low's Limited Edition. The current series of Twelve Low Caricatures, printed on hand-made paper with meticulous care so that they are scarcely distinguishable from the originals—each caricature signed by Low and numbered—plus—

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# THE WEEK IN THE CITY

INVESTORS' GREETINGS—FINLAND—GOLD CLAUSE DECISION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS—DORMAN LONG

AT this season of the year we investors must not think too much of the letter of our contracts. Let us send Christmas greetings even to those who " done us wrong." First, President Roosevelt. He has dishonoured our gold clauses and caused terrible exchange havoc, but he has brought a happy Christmas to two millions or more men restored to work, and to dozens of professors. An American correspondent writes to us :—" Outside the brokerage business the average American citizen is getting along very well, and Roosevelt's picture is always heartily applauded at the cinemas." Only the Wall Street " banksters " and the brokers turn sick at his sight. Then greetings to Dr. Schacht ! He has just announced a further cut in the cash payments on all German external loans (except the 7 per cent. (Dawes) and 5½ per cent. (Young) loans). Bondholders will now receive 30 per cent. in cash and 70 per cent. in scrip discountable at 50 per cent. of its face value, *i.e.*, an effective 65 per cent. This may have angered the British representatives of the bondholders, but let us remember that Dr. Schacht has brought a happy Christmas to the millions of loyal Nazis who regard all bankers as Jews, and to the great Nazi leaders who are rearming their diplomacy. Next autumn we shall probably be congratulating Dr. Schacht on the success of his great inflation which, having destroyed the export surplus, made the whole of the German external debt worthless. And greetings to Lord Vestey ! The proposal to cut the rate of interest on Union Cold Storage preference shares for consideration offered, which is to be fought in the Courts, may have alarmed all holders of preference shares who regarded their shares as irredeemable and inviolable, but it should bring joy this season to the Vestey family.

* * *

The example of the British Government in guaranteeing the external creditors of Newfoundland against all loss, seems to have inspired the Finnish Government, which has offered to guarantee the sterling bonds of the Municipal Mortgage Bank of Finland, provided the bondholders agree to a reduction in the rate of interest from 6½ per cent. to 5 per cent. per annum, beginning with the coupon falling due in July, 1934. The alternative is complete default and liquidation of the Municipal Mortgage Bank, seeing that many of its borrowers have defaulted, and, on the bank resorting to foreclosure, it has in many cases been impossible to find buyers or occupiers. The British investor is interested in the issue of £2,000,000 (outstanding £1,855,000) of 6½ per cent. sterling mortgage bonds which are at present quoted at about 90. If the interest is to be reduced from 6½ per cent. to 5 per cent. to yield £5 11*s.* 0*d.* per cent., an exchange into the Industrial Mortgage Bank of Finland, 6 per cent. sterling bonds at 100½ to yield £5 19*s.* 6*d.* per cent. is desirable. These bonds are guaranteed by the Government of Finland and the credit of Finland is good. Unlike most countries off the gold standard, Finland is not dependent upon artificial restrictions for the maintenance of an adequate supply of foreign exchange. Up to September 30th it had improved its export surplus and on the basis of these figures the year's export surplus should be about 1,300 million Fmks.—sufficient to cover the external debt service over five times. Apart from the Municipal Mortgage Bank the banking situation in Finland is sound enough. The gold and foreign exchange reserves of the Bank of Finland represent a note cover of 76.3 per cent. at the end of September last, as compared with 61½ per cent. at the beginning of the year. The 1934 Budget introduced on September 1st was balanced without resort to loans or increased taxation. All the indices point to a gradual improvement in Finland's economic position this year.

* * *

The House of Lords judgment in the case of Feist *v.* Société Intercommunale Belge d'Electricité may uphold the sanctity of a " gold clause " in English law, but it should not be forgotten that Parliament can change the law. If every new issue of a debenture or bond on the London market were to have a " gold clause " in the prospectus, as a sort of company promoter's bait, Parliament would no doubt have to take action after the style of the American Congress and make it illegal to pay debts except in legal tender notes for the face value of the claim. For the time being the Feist case has cleared up some important points. The " gold clause " in the Belgian Electricity bond was badly drafted. The issue originally was to have been made in New York, and the London issuing house merely copied the American " gold clause." Unfortunately the English version—" in sterling in gold coin of the United Kingdom of or equal to the standard of weight and fineness existing on the 1st day of September, 1928 "—meant nothing, for there were no gold coins of the required amount in circulation at the time and the Gold Standard Act of 1925 had made notes inconvertible into gold coin. If the words of this " gold clause " could not have been used by the parties in the sense which they literally bore, ought they to be ignored altogether as meaningless or ought some meaning to be attributed to them if any could be discovered from the document as a whole ? This was the point at issue and the Lords decided that the words should be construed as a reference, not to the mode of payment but to the measure of the borrower's obligation, *i.e.*, " pay . . . in sterling a sum equal to the value of £100 if it were paid in gold coin of the United Kingdom of or equal to the standard and weight of fineness, etc." As a matter of equity the Lords decision will give general satisfaction for it is obviously fairer to give a badly drafted clause the meaning which was obviously in the mind of the parties concerned than to give it no meaning at all or a meaning which was contrary to the general intention of the bond.

* * *

This decision should embarrass three Governments—the British, the Australian and, if it were at all sensitive to external opinion, the German. The British Government had already been so embarrassed by its U.K. 5½ per cent. dollar bonds (with gold clause) as to offer holders an exchange into sterling Treasury bonds on favourable terms. The majority accepted, but there are still some U.K. 5½ per cent. dollar bonds in existence (not redeemable before Feb. 1st, 1937), which are quoted in New York at 122½ (114½ before the House of Lords decision). There is nothing to prevent the Treasury honouring the judgment in the Belgian Electricity case by paying according to the " measure of the obligation," *i.e.*, at the rate of 87 dollars per $1,000 bond on the basis of the present dollar-gold exchange. And will the British Government now stop supporting the Egyptian Government in its claim to pay the service of the Egyptian Unified Debt 4 per cent. gold bonds in depreciated paper currency ? And will the Australian Government recognise English law by paying coupons on its various dollar bonds at their equivalent in gold exchange ? With Commonwealth 5 per cent. dollar bonds selling at 85½ and int. New York, this point is particularly intriguing. Finally, will the German Government change its attitude to the gold clause in the 5½ per cent. (Young) loan, seeing that it had previously justified payment in depreciated pounds on the sterling issue by citing the judgments in the Belgian Electricity case which are now overruled ? The market, however, will move cautiously. On the strength of the Lords' judgment it should be quoting Belgian Electricity bonds at 150 ; but the best bid is 115 in a nominal market.

* * *

The 4 per cent. and 5½ per cent. debenture holders of Dorman Long have agreed to give the company a moratorium up to 31st March, 1934, and borrowing powers up to £300,000 upon security ranking in priority to the 5½ per cent. debenture stock. In the meantime it is hoped that a fresh scheme of amalgamation with the South Durham-Cargo Fleet group will be worked out. This amalgamation is long overdue, for it is the most important step towards the rationalisation of the iron and steel trades on the North-East coast. One of the obstacles in rationalising the British iron and steel industry has been the difficulty in writing down debts in an industry where the joint stock banks have generally managed to secure a first charge. In the circular issued by the directors of Dorman Long it is stated that it is the intention of Barclays Bank to retire from its position as trustee for the 5½ per cent. debenture stockholders. Does this mean that Barclays Bank has been acting as trustee for the debenture stockholders and at the same time securing charges in front of the 5½ per cent. debentures as one of the company's bankers ? The 5½ per cent. debenture stock of Dorman Long has fallen back from 62¾ to 48, and for those who have the courage to believe in the rationalisation of British iron and steel it should be an attractive purchase. The present increase in shipbuilding orders and the recent orders placed by the home railways certainly give some promise of relief to the heavy iron and steel companies. Everything points to a further rise in the iron and steel market, for dealers are extremely short of stock. Herein lie its strength and weakness.

# London Amusements

## MATINEES

*All at 2.30 p.m. unless otherwise stated.*

**ALHAMBRA.** Lilac Time.
Xmas Week:—Boxing Day, Wed., Thurs., Sat.
New Year's Week:—Mon., Wed., Sat.

**COMEDY.** Treasure Island. Daily 2.15.

**DRURY LANE.** Ball at the Savoy. W. & S.

**DUCHESS.** Laburnum Grove. Th. & Sat.

**DUKE OF YORK'S.** Daily.
Alice in Wonderland.

**GLOBE.** "Proscenium." Tues., Th., Sat.

**HIPPODROME.** Give Me a Ring. W. & S.

**HOLBORN EMPIRE.** Daily 2.15.
Where the Rainbow Ends.

**PALACE.** Gay Divorce. Wed. & Sat.

**PICCADILLY.** Sleeping Clergyman. M. W. S.

**PRINCES.** On With the Show. Daily.

**ST. JAMES'.** Wed. & Sat.
The Late Christopher Bean.

**S. MARTIN'S.** The Wind & the Rain. M. Tu. F.

**WESTMINSTER.** DAILY.
Alice & Thomas & Jane.

**WINTER GARDEN.** On the Rocks. W. S. 2.15.

## THEATRES

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Oskar Denes, Natalie Hall, Rosy Barsony

**DUCHESS.** (Tem. 8243.) 8.30, Mat., Th., Sat., 2.30.
EDMUND GWENN in a New Comedy
**LABURNUM GROVE.** By J. B. PRIESTLEY.
EXTRA MATS. BOXING DAY & WED., (27th), 2.30.

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## COMPANY MEETING.

## CARRERAS, LIMITED.

The thirtieth annual general meeting of Carreras, Ltd., was held on Tuesday at Arcadia Works, Hampstead Road, N.W. Sir Louis B. Baron, Bart. (chairman and managing director) said (in part):

Owing to the expansion of the business both at home and abroad, your directors thought it prudent to increase the capital of the company by the issue of £1,000,000 Four and a-Half per Cent. Redeemable Preference shares. The issue took place in March last, and we are proud to say that the credit of your company is such that we had to close the list within a very short time of its opening, owing to this being subscribed for many times over. Those who showed their confidence were rewarded, as the shares were quoted at a premium.

You will no doubt recollect that at our last few general meetings I have repeatedly emphasised that each period under review was beset with great difficulties owing to the intensive competition we had to meet. During the past year competition had become increasingly acute, and in a plan devised by the Tobacco Trade Association, which represents all sections of the trade, to deal with a number of questions affecting the organisation of the industry there was included by general agreement a provision which was designed to put an end to coupon trading in the industry. As has already been announced, the issue of coupons, certificates, miniature cards, and similar things with an exchangeable value will be discontinued.

This new arrangement will necessitate many readjustments. What the eventual outcome will be is very difficult to foreshadow, but I can assure you that had your directors not felt confident that the eventual result would be for the benefit of this company they would naturally not have entered into any such arrangement.

It will, of course, take some little time to clear up the past situation, but when once that is accomplished my colleagues and I hope and believe that we can look forward to a very bright future.

It is a great pleasure to your directors to report the satisfactory results of the past year; no doubt, you have studied the balance-sheet which has been presented to you, and have observed the stronger position of the company in all directions. Not only has the dividend been maintained, but there has been a substantial increase in the amount carried forward, after provision has been made for every expense that was incurred in the past year. I can assure you that you can rely upon each one of your directors to use every effort for the continuation of the satisfactory career of this business.

The Report and Dividend resolutions were carried unanimously.

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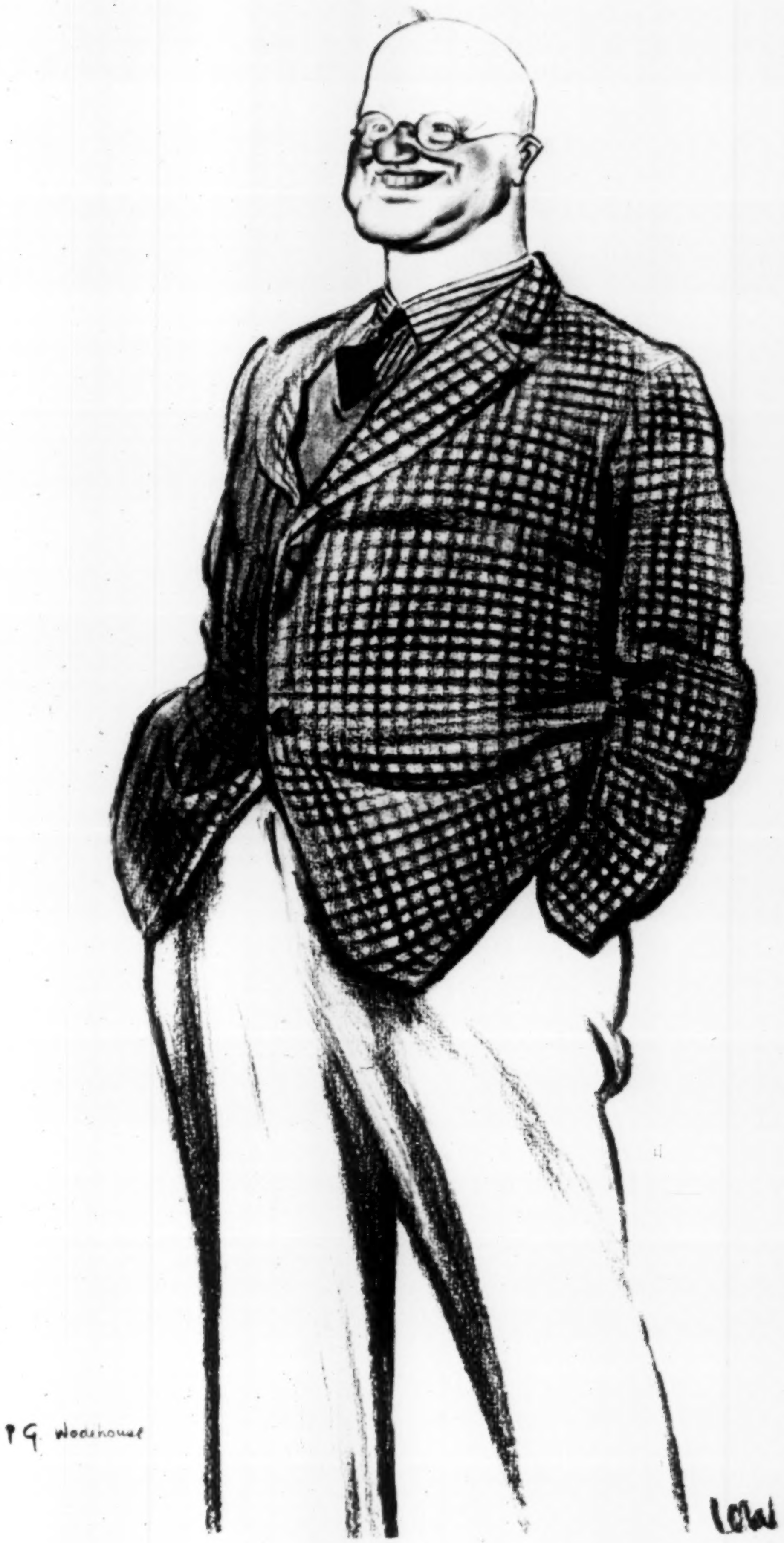
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